DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 366 993 CS 214 245

AUTHOR	Hall, John; And Others
TITLE	Standard Grade English Achievement and Competencies Grades 3 to 6. SCRE Research Report No. 55. Research Report Series.
INSTITUTION	Scottish Council for Research in Education.
SPONS AGENCY	Scottish Office Education Dept., Edinburgh.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-947833-92-7
PUB DATE	Jan 94
NOTE	83p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Elementary Education; English Instruction; Foreign Countries; *Low Achievement; Portfolios (Background Materials); *Reading Achievement; Reading Research; Speech; *Student Evaluation; *Writing Achievement; Writing Research
IDENTIFIERS	*Scotland

ABSTRACT

This study examined the actual performance of lower-achieving candidates in Standard Grade English. Information was collected over two years from the examination scripts and folios of course work of over 300 low-achieving students in grades three through six at several large schools throughout Scotland. A number of schools were visited to study the classroom work of a selected number of low-attaining pupils. Results indicated that (1) within each element of the Standard Grade, candidates who achieved different overall Standard Grade awards were clearly separated, as could be seen in the distinct "bands" apparent in the profiles; (2) reading candidates consistently performed better on those criteria related to extracting individual items of information from a text than demonstrating an awareness of literary techniques used in the texts; (3) in writing, candidates were most successful in conveying information but less successful in making use of literary conventions; (4) frequently one of the two pieces included in the writing folio demonstrated a lower level of achievement than the other, lowering the grade given for the folio; (5) the Talking element of Standard Grade English was entirely teacher-assessed but sample sizes were relatively small, and therefore not grouped; and (6) the framework of competencies used to evaluate achievement appeared to work well as an assessment tool. (Nineteen tables and eight figures of data are included; the extended grade-related criteria and appendix of data illustrating performance in the individual criteria are attached.) (RS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 366 993

Standard Grade English Achievement and Competences Grade 3 to 6

John Hall
Natalie Fenwick
Harry Black

RESEARCH REPORT SERIES

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

R. WAKE

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Standard Grade English
Achievement and Competences
Grade 3 to 6

John Hall
Natalie Fenwick
Harry Black

CS214245

The Scottish Council for Research in Education

SCRE Research Report No 55

ISBN 0 947833 92 7

Copyright © 1993 The Scottish Council for Research in Education

First published January 1994

A report arising from the project (reference TRR/7/19) funded by the Scottish Office Education Department between October 1991 and March 1993.

The views expressed are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the Scottish Council for Research in Education or the Scottish Office Education Department.

Printed and bound by The Scottish Council for Research in Education, 15 St John Street, Edinburgh EH8 8JR.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful for the assistance and insights provided by members of our advisory committee during the lengthy period of analysis which was an essential part of this study. The guidance and encouragement given to us by members of HMI and the Scottish Examination Board are also appreciated.

We would also like to express our gratitude to the administration section of the Scottish Examination Board for its co-operation in collecting and organising the large number of examination scripts from both 1991 and 1992.

Special thanks are due to those teachers who allowed us into their classrooms to gather information from both themselves and their pupils. The schools with which we worked most closely are listed below.

Thank you also to Kay Young our project secretary who coped admirably with a complex and difficult layout.

John Hall

Harry Black

Natalie Fenwick

July 1993

Banff Academy	Grampian Region
Garnock Academy	Ayr Division
Gleniffer High School	Renfrew Division
Grangemouth High School	Central Region
Inveralmond Commuity School	Lothian Region
Stranraer Academy	Dumfries and Galloway Region

Contents

	Page
List of tables	(vi)
List of figures	(vii)
1 Introduction	1
Aims of Study	1
Method	1
The framework of competences	1
Examination scripts	3
Study of school work	3
The pattern of awards in Standard Grade English	3
Selection of the sample	3
The Standard Grade papers	4
Analysing the papers	6
Presentation of results	7
2 Comparisons between sources of assessment information	8
Comparisons of assessments made by the SEB, the research team and teachers	8
Comparisons between SEB Grades and those given by the research team	8
Comparisons between SEB Grades and those given by teachers	9
Comparisons between papers	9
Summary of identifiable strengths and weaknesses	11
3 Performance in reading	14
Critical Evaluations	14
Explanation of the criteria and the methods used	14
Overview of findings	15
Comparison of performance on different criteria	15
Imaginative Responses to Reading	19
Explanation of the criteria and the methods used	19
Overview of findings	20
Close Reading	21
Number of opportunities given to display competence in the criteria?	21
Comparisons of performance on the criteria: Foundation paper	22
Comparisons of performance on the criteria: General paper	23
Comparisons of performance on the criteria: Credit paper	24

4 Performance in Writing 27
General comments on Writing 27
Explanation of the criteria and the methods used 27
The Writing Folio 28
Overview of findings 28
Comparison of performance on different criteria 28
The Writing Examination 32
Overview of findings 32
Comparison of performance on different criteria 33
Comparison between folio and examination 37

5. Performance in Talking 38

6 Knowledge about language: technical terms used in English 41

7 Points for discussion 43
Patterns of results 43
Classroom concerns 43
Criteria performed best and worst 43
Folio - need for consistency 44
Examination concerns 44
The EGRC framework 44
Coverage of criteria 45
Changes to the grade-related criteria 46
5-14 Links? 46
Different purposes of assessment 48

Appendices 49

Page

Tables

1	Structure of criteria in Standard Grade English	2
2	Number of candidates' scripts analysed for each year	4
3	Comparison of grades awarded for individual papers with overall Standard Grade award	11
4	1991 and 1992 examination papers	12
5	1991 and 1992 examination criteria	12
6	1992 Classroom data: estimates for elements	13
7	1992 classroom data: estimates for criteria	13
8	Critical Evaluations: summary of criteria performed 'best' and 'least well' by candidates who achieved different Standard Grade awards	19
9	Distribution of performances in Imaginative Responses to Reading	21
10	Distribution of performances in Close Reading Foundation paper	23
11	Distribution of performances in Close Reading General paper	23
12	Distribution of performances in Close Reading Credit paper	24
13	Close Reading Examination: summary of criteria performed 'best' and 'least well' by candidates who achieved different Standard Grade awards	25
14	Writing Folio: summary of criteria performed 'best' and 'least well' by candidates who achieved different Standard Grade awards	32
15	Writing Examination: summary of criteria performed 'best' and 'least well' by candidates who achieved different Standard Grade awards	36
16	Teachers' estimates of grades in Individual Talk	39
17	Teachers' estimates of grades in Discussion	39
18	Teachers' estimates of the knowledge and use of technical terms in English	42
19	5-14 attainment targets in Writing, Level E, compared with Standard Grade Writing EGRC	47

Page

Figures

1	Distribution of Standard Grade awards	3
2	Structure of Standard Grade English	5
3	Comparisons of candidates' performance in the critical evaluations criteria	16
4	Close Reading: number of opportunities to achieve each of the criteria	22
5	Comparisons of performance in the writing folio criteria	30
6	Comparisons of performance in the writing examination criteria	34
7	Distribution of grades for Individual Talk	39
8	Distribution of grades for Discussion	39

1 Introduction

Aims of Study

This study set out to examine the actual performance of lower achieving candidates in Standard Grade English. In particular the three aims of the study are as follows:

- to describe the actual competences in English of candidates gaining grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 in Standard Grade English;
- to describe the competences shown in school work by these candidates;
- to identify any changes which might seem desirable in grade related criteria which might lead to improvements in the teaching of basic competences in English.

At the same time as this study was taking place, a parallel study was addressing similar questions in relation to Standard Grade Mathematics. The maths study is reported separately.

Method

In order to meet the aims of this study information was collected from the candidates' examination scripts and folios of course work, and supplemented by looking at the classroom work of a sub-sample of candidates. In each case the performance of candidates was analysed according to an agreed framework of competences. Since we were mainly interested in pupils of average and below-average attainment, our sample was drawn from large schools throughout Scotland which were likely to provide substantial numbers of pupils at each grade. Examination scripts and folios from two consecutive years were analysed and a number of schools were visited in order to study the classroom work of a selected number of low-attaining pupils.

The framework of competences

At an early stage in the project a working party was set up to discuss the detail of the framework of competences which would be used to analyse the candidates' work. This working party looked at a range of sets of competences including those deriving from the AAP, APU, 5-14 development programme, and National Certificate Communication outcomes. Since both the SEB and teachers work to the extended grade-related criteria (EGRC), and since these were considered to be reasonably comprehensive statements of language competences, it was decided that the EGRC would be retained as the basis of analysis. One modification in

English was the addition of a set of questions on technical (linguistic and literary) terms which the pupils might be expected to know and use.

Throughout this report when we refer to 'criteria', as opposed to 'extended grade-related criteria' (or EGRC) we are referring to those general attributes which the candidates' work is expected to contain. These are, in effect, the EGRC without the 'grade-related' element: they are generalised statements of **what** the candidates have to do without any corresponding statement of **how well** they are expected to do it. To that extent they are abstractions from the EGRC. Nevertheless they are useful devices for organising the material in this report. These 'criteria' are set out below in Table 1.

***Table 1** Structure of criteria in Standard Grade English*

Reading	Close Reading (Exam)	Statement of the **main concerns** of the text Statement of **individual items** retrieved from the text Draw an **inference** from a key statement in the text Comment on an aspect of the author's **point of view** Identify features of the **author's technique**
	Critical Evaluations (Folio)	Statement of **main ideas and purposes** of text Statement of **personal reaction** to text Awareness of **technique** and critical technology Awareness of the **purpose** of the assignment
	Imaginative Responses (Folio)	Allusion to relevant areas of **content** Attention to **main ideas** and purposes of the text Evocation of **mood and tone** Awareness of **technique** and use of stylistic devices Account taken of **purpose** of assignment
Writing	(Exam and Folio)	Attend to the **purpose of the task** Convey **information** Present **ideas and opinions** Give an account of a **personal experience** Express **personal feelings** Use the **conventions** of a chosen literary form Write **correctly** and intelligibly Write at appropriate **length**
Talking	Individual Talk	The candidate can attend to: **Content** **Purpose** **Language** **Expression** **Awareness of audience**
	Discussion	The candidate's performance is characterised by: **Substance and relevance** of the contribution **Account taken** of other contributions **Awareness** of situation Control of **expression**

Examination scripts

Examination scripts from over 300 candidates in both 1991 and 1992 were analysed according to the agreed framework of competences. Results were classified by the grade achieved in the final Standard Grade awarded by the SEB. Details of the sample are provided below.

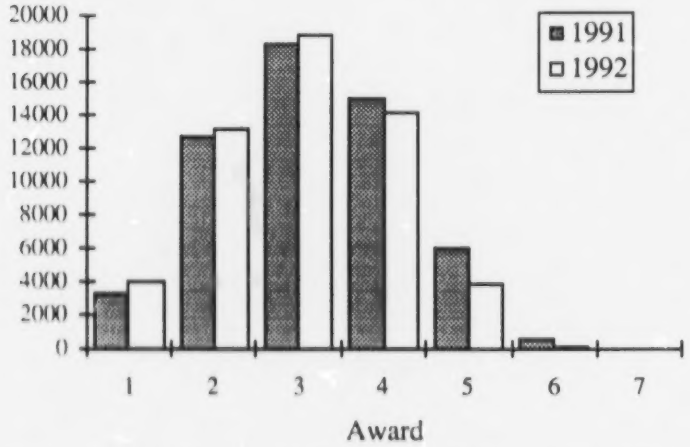
Study of school work

Each of a selected core of six schools was visited by the research team. Each visit lasted up to a week during which time the school work of a sample of pupils was analysed and information was collected from teachers on their estimates of the performance of these pupils. This sample was chosen to be representative of pupils who were likely to achieve Grades 3-6 in Standard Grade English.

The pattern of awards in Standard Grade English

The national distribution of all awards in Standard Grade English for both 1991 and 1992 is shown in Figure 1. From this we can see that there were, in fact, very small proportions of the candidates in each year who achieved less than a grade 5 in Standard Grade English. The comparative lack of awards at grades 6 and 7 was in contrast to the parallel project in mathematics.

Figure 1 ***Distribution of Standard Grade awards***



[Note: those candidates recorded as 'no award' are not shown in this graph]

Selection of the sample

The main sample of Standard Grade scripts was drawn from a core group of ten secondary schools. These were large schools which were likely to give us reasonable numbers of candidates at each grade. For each school the scripts of ten candidates at each of grades 3, 4 and 5 were collected from the Scottish Examination Board. As a result of the relatively low incidence of grades 6 and 7 awards in English, the scripts of **all** grade 6 candidates from these schools were requested for analysis. All grade 7 scripts, from

whatever origin, were also requested. Despite this strategy the numbers of grade 6 and 7 scripts available for analysis remained very low, with only the grade 6 sample from 1991 providing sufficient numbers for analysis. The same ten core schools were used for both the 1991 and 1992 samples. The total numbers of candidates at each grade in each year whose scripts were analysed is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 *Number of candidates' scripts analysed for each year*

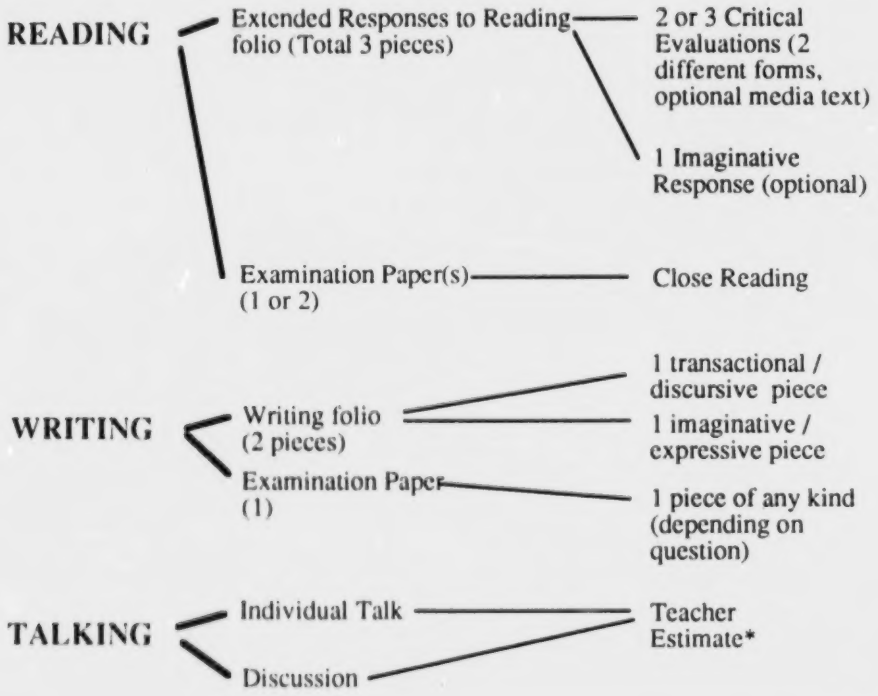
Overall Standard Grade award in English	1991	1992
Grade 3	100	100
Grade 4	100	100
Grade 5	100	100
Grade 6	32	2*
Grade 7	1*	0

* = insufficient number for separate analysis

The Standard Grade papers

In this report we are using the term 'paper' to refer to any of the separate component parts of Standard Grade English which contribute to the final award given to the candidates. These equate to the 'sub-elements' in SEB terminology. For example, the two sub-elements which constitute the Writing element are the Writing examination paper and the Writing folio, both of which we refer to as papers. Therefore the term paper, as we are using it, is not restricted to traditional examination papers, but includes folios of work submitted by the candidates, and the recorded grades for the Talking element, which are derived from the EGRC for Individual Talk and Discussion, and which are submitted by the class teacher. The component parts of Standard Grade English are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Structure of Standard Grade English



*Teachers are required to provide only one estimate for the element Talking, but this is derived from separate EGRC for each sub-element.

The papers which we analyse are therefore:

- *The Close Reading Paper(s)*: these are taken by the candidates under examination conditions. Papers are set at Credit, General and Foundation levels and, in most cases, candidates will sit papers at two adjacent levels.
- *The Writing Examination*: is also taken by the candidates under examination conditions. There is one paper to cover all levels. Candidates choose one assignment from a wide selection given in the examination paper. The resulting pieces of writing can vary in their nature and purpose (whether they are primarily transactional, expressive or imaginative). Different types of writing may necessitate the use of different criteria in marking.
- *The Writing Folio*: is part of the candidates' folio of course work and consists of two pieces of writing submitted by the candidate. Of these one must be of a broadly transactional/discursive nature while the other should be expressive/imaginative.
- *The Extended Responses to Reading Folio*: is the other part of the candidates' folio of course work. It consists of three extended pieces of writing on literary or media texts. Of these two should be critical evaluations of literary texts, each of a different form (i.e.

poetry, drama or prose). The third piece may be either a third critical evaluation of a literary text (of any form); a critical evaluation of a media text; or an imaginative response to a literary text. There are different criteria used in the marking of critical evaluations (of either literary texts or media texts) and imaginative responses. These are analysed separately below.

- *The teachers' estimates of Individual Talk and Discussion:* teachers submit an aggregated estimate of each candidate's performance in these as the Talking element of Standard Grade. However, for the purposes of analysis, the research team obtained separate estimates of each from the teachers in the sample schools. They are marked according to separate (but similar) criteria.

Analysing the papers

The relevant extended grade-related criteria (EGRC) are used by the SEB markers to award grades for the writing examination and each of the pieces in the folio of course work. These pieces are 'directly graded' by the markers. That is, the performance of the candidate is judged in the light of the criteria and an overall grade is assigned. The EGRC are also used by the teachers in deciding a grade for Talk and Discussion. Teachers and SEB markers are encourged to mark 'holistically': they are expected to take an overview of the entire performance and make a judgement on the level of the performance - i.e. whether it is Foundation, General or Credit level. They then refer to the 'distinguishing factors' given in the EGRC to decide on the grade to be awarded within the level and, in making any comments, they may refer back to the statements within the EGRC to justify their decision.

The Close Reading papers differ in that they are marked according to a marking scheme, the marks are totalled, and these total marks are converted into a grade according to a set of cut-off scores determined by the SEB. The Close Reading papers are not, therefore, 'directly graded'.

We therefore have some papers which are externally marked and directly graded (the Writing Examination, the Writing folio and the Reading folio); some which are internally marked and directly graded (Talk and Discussion); and some which are externally marked but not directly graded (the Close Reading papers). This restricts the comparisons which can be made between performance on different papers.

The research team had available to them the final overall Standard Grade award for each of the candidates in the sample, the grade awarded for each of the directly graded papers, and the 'holistic' grade awarded for each of the separate pieces in the Reading and Writing folios. All of these pieces were re-marked by the research team using the EGRC. However, the research team did not take a 'holistic' approach to the marking. Instead they concentrated on judging each piece in relation to the individual criteria, and awarding a grade for each criterion. Only when that had been done was an 'overall' grade assigned to each piece. This was because the main focus of the research was to be on the individual competences displayed by the candidates, and not an overall judgement of their level

of performance.

In analysing the Close Reading papers the research team first categorised each of the questions in the examination papers according to which of the criteria it was assessing. The candidates' correct answers to questions relating to each of the criteria were then totalled, as were the number of opportunities (i.e. questions) they were given to achieve each criterion. Analysis of the performance on the Close Reading papers therefore consists of looking at the proportion of times candidates were successful in achieving each criterion.

For the analysis of all papers the candidates were grouped according to the final overall Standard Grade award they were given by the SEB. The main body of the analysis consists of looking at how candidates who achieved different final Standard Grade awards performed on the individual criteria. There is also an examination made of the patterns of responses within the papers (looking at which criteria were performed most and least successfully by the sample candidates) and between the papers (looking at which papers candidates were more or less successful in).

Presentation of results

The presentation of the data used in this research is necessarily complex. We have tried, where possible, to provide the data and findings in tabular, graphical and discursive form. This may involve some repetition, but we are aware that not all readers respond in the same ways to different modes of presenting data. Nor do we imagine that all readers will want to read through the entire report. We have therefore tried to make each section as self-contained as possible. This also has involved us in some repetition.

Throughout the report reference is made to statistical differences between groups of candidates; between the performances of the samples in 1991 and 1992; and between proportions of the sample who achieve different criteria in particular papers; where these statistical differences are reported they are significant at the $p<0.01$ level.

Much of the data is presented in the form of graphical profiles which take the form of line graphs. We are aware that these are not, strictly speaking, an appropriate way of presenting categorical data, and that bar graphs would be more appropriate. However, these graphical profiles were felt to have an advantage in that they allowed an easier visual comparison of patterns of achievement between groups. Readers are warned that the lines are imaginary - there is nothing which exists 'between' the categories to be graphed - and are there purely for visual convenience.

2 Comparisons between sources of assessment information

Comparisons of assessments made by the SEB, the research team and teachers

It was not the principal intention of the research project to conduct any comparative evaluation of the assessments made by the SEB, teachers and researchers. However, some of the data which was gathered do allow us to make limited comparisons which give us some indication of the degree to which the different groups were interpreting the EGRC in similar ways.

Comparisons between SEB Grades and those given by the research team

Direct comparisons were possible between the overall grades awarded by the research team for the Writing Examination papers and the equivalent grades awarded by the SEB markers. A statistical analysis of these grades for both samples revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between them. It can therefore be concluded that the research team was interpreting the criteria in the same way as the SEB markers, and was applying the same standards to their marking of the Writing Examination paper.

The situation with the writing folio pieces is slightly more complicated in that the SEB grades are aggregates of the two writing folio pieces. The method of aggregation used involves taking the mean of the two grades awarded and 'rounding down' to the nearest whole grade. It should be noted that in the context of Standard Grade 'down' and 'lower' refer to the arithmetically greater number - i.e. '2' is 'lower' than '1'. In the vast majority of cases re-marked by the researchers the difference between the two pieces was not greater than one grade. The researchers recorded their assessments of each of the two pieces separately. A comparison of the lower of the two grades awarded by the researchers (if any differences existed) revealed no significant difference between it and the SEB writing folio grade. There was, however, a statistically significant difference between the SEB writing folio grade and the better of the two grades recorded by the researchers, with the researchers' grades tending to be better than the SEB award for the folio. This would be expected, given the methods of marking and aggregation outlined above. We can therefore conclude that, in both the writing examination and the writing folio, the researchers were interpreting the EGRC consistently with the standards being applied by the SEB markers.

No other direct comparisons between the SEB grades and the researchers' grades were possible.

Comparisons between SEB Grades and those given by teachers

Some comparisons were also possible between estimated grades awarded by the teachers and the actual grades awarded by the SEB. These are based on the smaller classroom sample of candidates.

No significant difference was found between the teachers' estimates of the grades for writing and the SEB awards for either the writing examination or the writing folio. Again we can conclude that the teachers were applying the standards inherent in the EGRC in a way which was consistent with the SEB markers.

The teachers' estimates for 'critical evaluations' could be compared with the SEB awards for the reading folio. While this is not a strict comparison (as the grades awarded for the reading folio will include some candidates who chose to write an 'imaginative response'), there was nevertheless no statistically significant difference.

Further comparisons were also possible between the estimates supplied by teachers for Writing, Close Reading and Critical Evaluations and the final overall Standard Grade award given by the SEB. This is an even more indirect comparison, which is likely to be affected by the operation of aggregation procedures used in arriving at the final award. In all of these cases there was a statistically significant difference; the SEB final award tended to be higher than the teachers' estimates.

The teachers' estimates for Individual Talk and Discussion showed no significant difference when compared to the final overall Standard Grade award.

It would seem, therefore, that teachers tended to interpret the EGRC in a way which was consistent with the standards applied by the SEB.

Further analysis of the estimates supplied by the teachers revealed that in no case was there any statistically significant difference between the grades awarded for the individual criteria within any given paper. This was in contrast with the grades awarded by the researchers, who tended to distinguish between the performance of candidates on individual criteria. It may, therefore, be concluded that teachers are making holistic judgements of candidates performance on, for example, Writing, but are not making detailed distinctions between their performance on the individual criteria which constitute the Writing EGRC. This is in line with the advice offered by the SEB on marking Standard Grade papers, and is not a criticism of teachers' practice.

Comparisons between papers.

It is possible to make some comparisons between the grades awarded by the SEB for the various component papers of Standard Grade English. Direct comparisons are possible between the Writing Examination, the Writing Folio and the Reading Folio, as these are all both directly graded and externally marked. For the 1992 sample only it is also possible to include a comparison of the grades awarded for Individual Talk and Discussion, but some caution must be exercised as these figures are

obtained from a much smaller sample of candidates, and are based on estimated grades awarded by the class teachers, not by the SEB. It is not possible to include the Close Reading papers in these comparisons as they are given numerical marks which are then converted into grades through a system of cut-off scores.

Statistical analysis of the overall grades for each paper shows that in both the 1991 and 1992 samples, candidates tended to achieve their best grades for the Writing Examination paper.

This would suggest that candidates are performing better at writing under examination conditions than they are when they are working in class. However, two factors combine to complicate the picture. The first of these is the method of aggregating the grades for the two pieces in the Writing Folio. If the award given for each piece differs, the rules of aggregation will tend to round down the overall award for the folio. A further complication became apparent when the research team looked at the individual pieces of writing in the candidates' folios and the exam. It was clear that often the candidates' best piece of writing was in the folio, but that the second folio piece frequently did not match it in performance. It therefore seems that many candidates can produce better writing for their folio than they produce in the exam, but that they do not sustain this level of performance over both folio pieces.

Table 3 shows a comparison of the grades awarded by the SEB for each paper with the final overall Standard Grade awards of the candidates. The grades awarded for the Writing Examination paper show some differences from the final overall Standard Grade award, but there was no significant tendency for these to be more in one direction than another. They may be accounted for by normal variation in performance by candidates on different papers. Similarly, the grades awarded by teachers for Individual Talk and Discussion do not differ (in the sense given above) from the Standard Grade award. However, there is a significant difference between the awards for the Writing and Reading folios and the final overall Standard Grade award. In both cases the final Standard Grade award tends to be higher than the grade awarded for the individual papers.

Table 3 Comparison of grades awarded for individual papers with overall Standard Grade award

	SG award higher than paper award	SG award equal to paper award	Paper award higher than SG award	No of cases	Significance level
		1991 data			
Writing Exam	84	182	67	333	nsd
Writing Folio	143	157	33	333	0.0000
Reading Folio	156	150	25	331	0.0000
		1992 data			
Writing Exam	73	174	53	300	nsd
Writing Folio	123	153	26	302	0.0000
Reading Folio	149	136	17	302	0.0000
Discussion*	10	37	18	65	nsd
Individual Talk*	6	40	19	65	nsd

nsd = no significant difference

* Estimates of performance made by teachers, not the SEB.

When the data were analysed in more detail it became apparent that in the 1991 sample candidates who achieved an overall grade 3 tended to do significantly less well in their Writing Examination, while those who achieved a grade 6 overall tended to do significantly better in the Writing Examination. This pattern was not repeated in the 1992 sample.

Summary of identifiable strengths and weaknesses

Tables 4 to 7 summarise those instances where there were identifiable differences between candidates' performance on different papers or, within papers, on different criteria. All of these differences were identified as being statistically significant at the $p<0.01$ level.

***Table 4** 1991 and 1992 examination papers*

	1991 data		1992 data	
Area of Assessment	Paper in which pupils performed best	Paper in which pupils performed least well	Paper in which pupils performed best	Paper in which pupils performed least well
SEB awards *(not including awards for close reading)*	Writing exam	Extended responses to reading folio	Writing exam	Extended responses to reading folio

***Table 5** 1991 and 1992 examination criteria*

	Criterion in which pupils performed best	Criterion in which pupils performed least well	Criterion in which pupils performed best	Criterion in which pupils performed least well
Extended responses to reading folio:				
1. Critical evaluations	Statement of main ideas	Awareness of technique	Statement of main ideas	Awareness of technique
2. Imaginative responses	*No differences*	*No differences*	*No differences*	*No differences*
Close reading: Credit	Individual items	Comment on author's point of view	Individual items	Main concerns
General	Individual items	Technique	Individual items	Technique
Foundation	Individual items	Technique	Individual items	Technique
Writing folio:				
1. General	Convey information	Literary	Convey information	Literary
2. Personal account	Convey information	Express personal feelings	Convey information	Express personal feelings
3. Discussion	Convey information	Ideas and opinions	Convey information	Ideas and opinions
Writing exam:				
1. General	Length	Literary conventions	Length	Literary conventions
2. Personal account	Convey information	Express personal feelings	Convey information	Express personal feelings
3. Discursive writing	Ideas and opinions	Literary conventions	*No differences*	*No differences*

Table 6 *1992 Classroom data: estimates for elements*

	Researcher estimates		Teacher estimates	
Area of Assessment	Area in which pupils performed best	Area in which pupils performed least well	Area in which pupils performed best	Area in which pupils performed least well
Overall awards	*n/a*	*n/a*	Individual talk	Writing

Table 7 *1992 classroom data: estimates for criteria*

	Criterion in which pupils performed best	Criterion in which pupils performed least well	Criterion in which pupils performed best	Criterion in which pupils performed least well
Extended responses to reading:				
1. Critical evaluations	Statement of main ideas	Awareness of technique	*No differences*	*No differences*
2. Imaginative responses	*No differences*	*No differences*	*No differences*	*No differences*
Writing	Convey information	Literary conventions	*No differences*	*No differences*
Close reading	State individual items	Comment on author's point of view	*No differences*	*No differences*
Individual talk	*Insufficient number of cases*	*Insufficient number of cases*	*No differences*	*No differences*
Discussion	*No differences*	*No differences*	*No differences*	*No differences*

There are some brief points which may be made about the findings in these tables. There are very few differences in the pattern of criteria performed 'best' and 'least well' by the candidates in the 1991 and 1992 samples. The one clear difference – in the criterion performed 'least well' in the Close Reading Credit paper – may be due to particular features of the text and questions set in each year. The fact that 'no differences' were found for Discursive writing in the 1992 Writing Examination reflects the small number of candidates who chose to do a task which required that type of writing in 1992. Elsewhere we have a very consistent pattern emerging.

It is also interesting to note that teachers estimated that the candidates in the classroom sample would perform 'least well' in Writing. In fact, the Writing Examination paper was where candidates tended to achieve their best grades. The lack of any significant differences among individual criteria in the teachers' estimates is also noticeable. We suspect that this may be because teachers are unused to using the EGRC at this level of detail. The normal use of EGRC, in accordance with SEB guidance, is to use them holistically as a basis for an overall judgement of a candidate's work.

3 Performance in Reading

The Reading element of Standard Grade English is assessed by a folio of course work and Close Reading examination papers set at each of Foundation, General and Credit levels. The folio must contain three pieces of writing which are 'extended responses to reading'. Of these, two must be 'critical evaluations' of texts of different forms (poetry, prose and drama) read by the candidate, while the third can be either a further critical evaluation of a text of any of the forms, a critical evaluation of a 'media text', or an 'imaginative response' to the candidate's reading. There are separate EGRC for the assessment of 'critical evaluations' and 'imaginative responses'.

Critical Evaluations.

Explanation of the criteria and the methods used.

The extended grade-related criteria used to mark critical evaluations are shown in Appendix A.

There are four criteria which are stated at each level (Foundation, General and Credit) and grade (1-6). These may be summarised as:

- statement of main ideas and purposes of the text;
- statement of personal reaction to the text;
- awareness of technique (including, at higher levels, use of critical terminology);
- awareness of the purpose of the assignment (which includes appropriate length of response).

The data available from the SEB consisted of a single grade award for each candidate's folio. This represents a holistic estimate of each candidate's performance in 'extended responses to reading'. For some candidates the folio will include imaginative responses as well as critical evaluations.

The researchers re-marked each piece on the basis of the individual criteria. This means that, for example, a particular folio piece may have been recorded as representing a grade 4 performance for 'main ideas', 'personal reaction', and 'awareness of purpose', but only a grade 5 for 'awareness of technique'. For the 1992 examination sample, the researchers also recorded an overall estimate for each piece. This was not done for the 1991 sample.

In the extended responses to reading folio candidates submit three pieces. Two of these must be critical evaluations while the third may be either a critical evaluation or an imaginative response to reading. For each

candidate, therefore, there were either two or three critical evaluations to mark.

Since this research set out to discover what candidates are capable of achieving, it is their **best** performance on each criterion which is used for the analyses which follow. The candidates are grouped according to their final overall Standard Grade English award so that we can study the relationship between these overall Standard Grade awards and performance on individual criteria.

Overview of findings.

Of the three 'papers' which are both externally marked and directly graded by the SEB (the writing examination, the writing folio, and the extended responses to reading folio) there was a tendency for the extended responses to reading folio to be the paper on which candidates performed worst. This pattern was evident in both the 1991 and 1992 samples. Critical evaluations are only a part of this folio, but they are a major part.

The analyses below show that candidates appear to have had greatest difficulty in performing well on the criteria relating to their personal reaction to the text and their awareness of technique. The comparatively poor performance on the 'technique' criterion is especially noticeable amongst the lower-achieving candidates, and this is despite the fact that at these lower levels candidates are not required to use even 'basic' critical terminology.

Comparison of performance on different criteria

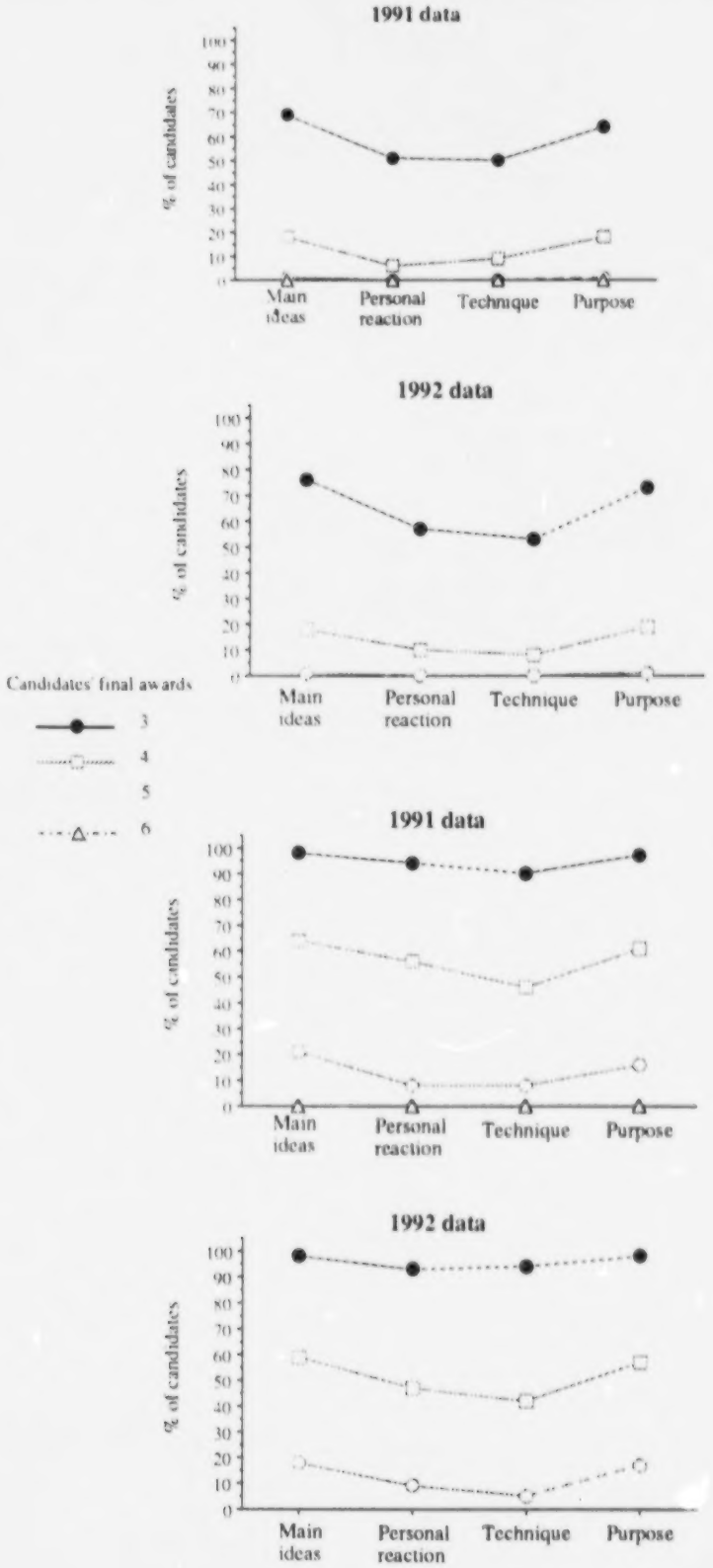
Figure 3 presents a series of profiles which show candidates' performance, at each grade, on the individual criteria in both the 1991 and 1992 examinations. The candidates are grouped according to the grade of their final overall award.

For example, profile A shows the 1991 data on those who achieved **at least** a grade 3 on each individual criterion. The top line shows the percentage of candidates whose final overall Standard Grade award was a grade 3. We can see that 70% of these candidates achieved a grade 3 for the 'main ideas' criterion; approximately 50% achieved grade 3 for 'personal reaction'; slightly less achieved grade 3 for 'technique'; and around 65% achieved grade 3 for 'awareness of the purpose of the assignment'. The line in the middle shows the corresponding percentages of candidates whose final award was grade 4 who achieved a grade 3 on these criteria. At the bottom of the profile, merging with the horizontal axis, are the grades 5 and 6 candidates who managed to achieve a grade 3 on each of these criteria.

If we look at the collection of profiles which make up Figure 3 several things become apparent.

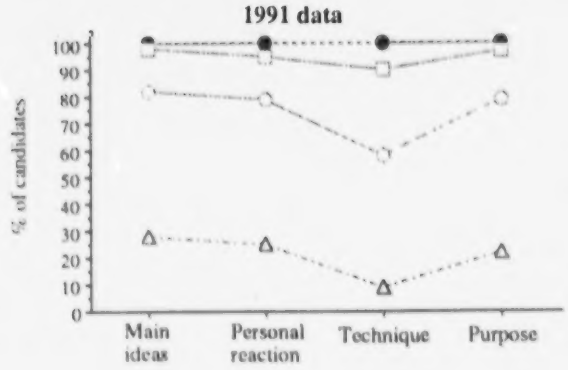
First of all, if we compare the 1991 data with the 1992 data, we can see that at each level of overall Standard Grade award the pattern of achievement across criteria is consistent from one year to the next. In other words, the profiles for the two years look very nearly the same. This suggests consistent interpretation of these criteria.

Figure 3 *Comparisons of candidates' performance in the critical evaluations criteria*

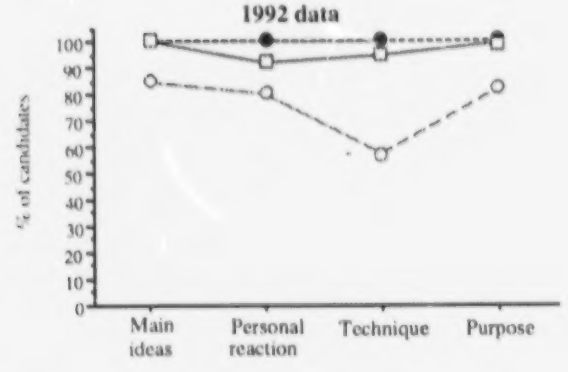


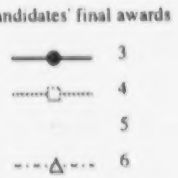
Profile E

Candidates measured against the criteria as stated at grade 5



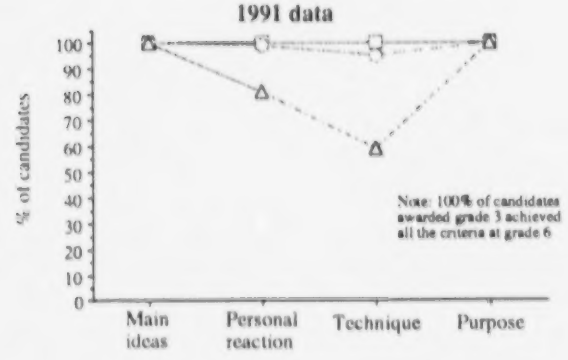
Profile F



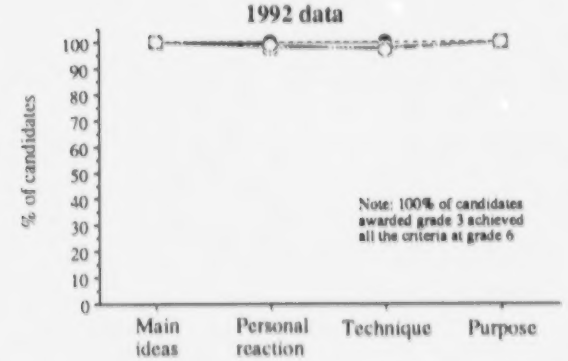


Profile G

Candidates measured against the criteria as stated at grade 6



Profile H



The obvious exception to this is the lack of grade 6 awards in the 1992 sample. This, however, is a function of the sample (which contained too few candidates who achieved a grade 6 to be analysed), and does not reflect on the candidates' relative achievement on the criteria.

The second point is that, when we look down the columns of profiles, we can see a clear separation of the grades. For example, if we look at profile C (the 1991 candidates who achieved at least a grade 4 for each criterion), we can see that between half and three-quarters of candidates whose overall Standard Grade result was grade 4 achieved grade 4 on each criterion. Almost all candidates whose overall Standard Grade result was grade 3 achieved at least a grade 4 performance on these criteria, while around 10-20% of grade 5 candidates managed to achieve grade 4 performances. This is a generally consistent pattern which suggests that the judgements based on the extended grade-related criteria are indeed identifying distinct levels of performance.

We would have expected there to be some variation in grades because of individual differences between performances of candidates (it would be unrealistic to expect that a candidate whose final overall Standard Grade award was at grade 3, for example, would always and only operate at grade 3 on all criteria). Nevertheless, the variation in grades is seldom more than one grade away from the final Standard Grade award, and the pattern is consistent.

The third point is that the relative degree of success on each criterion remains generally consistent from one year to the next, and at all levels of performance. No matter what overall Standard Grade award candidates eventually achieved, more of them appear to have found the criteria on 'main ideas' and 'awareness of purpose' easier to achieve than the other criteria. 'Technique' is generally poorly tackled, while 'personal reaction' appears to cause particular difficulties at grades 3 and 4 - even candidates whose overall Standard Grade result was grade 3 seem to find it relatively difficult to achieve a grade 3 on this criterion.

Table 8 summarises the criteria which candidates who achieved different final grades in Standard Grade English appeared to be most and least successful in achieving.

Table 8 Critical Evaluations: summary of criteria performed 'best' and 'least well' by candidates who achieved different Standard Grade awards

	1991 sample		1992 sample	
Final award	Criterion in which candidates performed best	Criterion in which candidates performed least well	Criterion in which candidates performed best	Criterion in which candidates performed least well
Grade 3	Main ideas	Technique	Main ideas	Personal reaction and Technique (tie)
Grade 4	Main ideas	Technique	Main ideas	Technique
Grade 5	Main ideas	Technique	Main ideas	Technique
Grade 6	Main ideas	Technique	Insufficient number of cases for analysis	Insufficient number of cases for analysis

Imaginative Responses to Reading

Explanation of the criteria and the methods used.

The extended grade-related criteria used for the marking of the 'imaginative responses' folio pieces are shown in Appendix A.

There are five criteria which are used to mark the imaginative responses. These may be summarised as:

- allusion to relevant areas of content;
- attention to main ideas and purposes;
- evocation of mood and tone;
- awareness of technique (use of stylistic devices);
- account taken of purpose of the assignment.

The third and fourth of these criteria (those relating to 'mood and tone' and 'awareness of technique') are unusual in that they only apply at grade 4 and above. There are no statements relating to these criteria at foundation level (grades 5 and 6).

'Imaginative response' is an optional element in the extended responses to reading folio. In both the 1991 and 1992 samples relatively few candidiates exercised this option, with the result that there were few examples of this type of folio piece available for analysis. Fifty one examples (16% of the sample) occurred in the 1991 sample and thirty-eight (13%) in the 1992 sample. This has severely restricted the analysis which can be carried out.

The researchers re-marked each piece, assigning to it a grade for each of the individual criteria. In the cases of the criteria relating to 'mood and tone' and 'awareness of technique', if the candidate failed to perform at grade 4 or above then the performance was recorded as a 'grade 7'. The researchers also recorded an overall holistic estimate of the performance for each piece.

Overview of findings

In general the imaginative responses submitted by candidates tended to be done less well than other pieces. For both the 1991 and 1992 samples the overall estimate grades for each piece tended be lower than those for either the writing examination paper or the writing folio submitted by the same candidates.

Comparisons of imaginative responses to other pieces within the extended responses to reading folio are more difficult. Only in the 1992 sample can we compare the overall estimate for each imaginative response piece, as made by the researchers, with the researchers' estimates of the overall grade of each of the critical evaluation pieces (this is because such overall estimates for each piece were only recorded for critical evaluations in the 1992 sample).

When we make these comparisons we find that there is a statistically significant difference between these candidates' performances on imaginative responses and their better performance in the two critical evaluations in the folio, with the imaginative response being performed more poorly. In contrast there is no statistically significant difference between the imaginative responses and the candidates' worse performance in critical evaluations. Imaginative responses tend to be performed relatively poorly.

There were relatively small numbers of candidates who submitted imaginative responses as a part of their folio, which meant that only a limited amount of analysis was possible on this data. However, there were no statistically significant differences in the performance of candidates on any of the criteria, once allowance was made for the lack of 'mood and tone' and 'awareness of technique' criteria at grades 5 and 6. This suggests relatively homogeneous performance by these candidates.

It was impossible to conduct any analysis of the relative performance of candidates with different levels of overall Standard Grade awards as the numbers available were too small.

The distributions of the candidates' performances on the individual criteria are set out in Table 9.

Table 9 Distribution of performances in Imaginative Responses to Reading

	1991 data N = 51							1992 data N = 38						
	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7
Allusion to relevant areas of content	0 0%	4 8%	5 10%	12 24%	12 24%	19 37%	0 0%	0 0%	1 3%	8 21%	6 16%	20 53%	3 8%	0 0%
Attention to main ideas and purposes	0 0%	2 4%	6 12%	12 24%	9 18%	20 39%	3 6%	0 0%	1 3%	8 21%	4 11%	18 47%	7 18%	0 0%
Evocation of mood and tone*	0 0%	1 2%	3 6%	14 27%	n/a	n/a	33 65%	0 0%	1 3%	1 3%	12 32%	n/a	n/a	24 63%
Awareness of technique (use of stylistic devices)*	0 0%	3 6%	2 4%	15 29%	n/a	n/a	31 61%	0 0%	1 3%	1 3%	15 39%	n/a	n/a	21 55%
Account taken of purpose of assignment	0 0%	3 6%	6 12%	11 20%	12 24%	19 37%	1 2%	0 0%	1 3%	6 16%	7 18%	18 47%	6 16%	0 0%
Overall estimated award†	0 0%	3 6%	5 10%	11 20%	11 20%	22 43%	0 0%	0 0%	1 3%	4 11%	8 21%	19 50%	6 16%	0 0%

* There are no statements of these criteria at grades 5 and 6. Therefore any candidate who failed to perform at grade 4 or above has been recorded as grade 7.

† This row represents estimates of the overall performance of each candidate in 'imaginative responses'. It is a holistic assessment of each piece. The numbers are therefore not the sum of the columns.

Close Reading

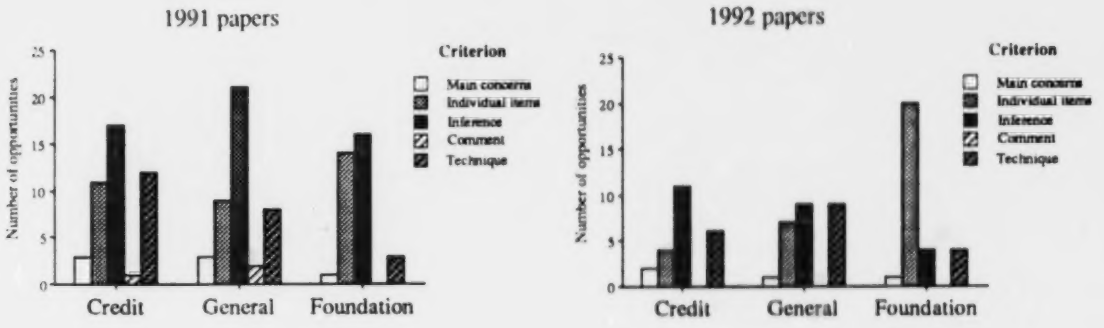
There are three 'Close Reading' papers in Standard Grade English, one each set at Foundation, General and Credit levels. Each consists of a short text and a set of questions which are designed to assess the candidates against the EGRC which are shown in Appendix A. Normally candidates will sit two of these papers set at adjacent levels (i.e. Foundation and General or General and Credit). Marks are awarded by the SEB markers for each question answered correctly and a grade is decided by applying cut-off scores to these marks. The Close Reading papers are therefore not directly graded with reference to the EGRC. In this they are different from all the other papers which we are reporting here. It was therefore necessary to adopt a different approach to their analysis.

Each question in each of the papers was examined by the researchers and categorised according to the criterion it was designed to assess. The researchers then recorded the number of questions in each paper which assessed each criterion, and the number of these questions answered successfully by each candidate. These were converted into 'percentages of opportunities achieved' by each candidate for each criterion.

Number of opportunities given to display competence in the criteria?

It is important to note that in the Close Reading examination papers, candidates were not always given an equal number of opportunities to achieve each of the criteria within a single paper. The differences across the levels of paper (Credit, General and Foundation) and across the two diets of examinations (1991 and 1992) are illustrated below in Figure 4.

Figure 4 *Close Reading: number of opportunities to achieve each of the criteria*



Each of the questions gave candidates the opportunity to demonstrate competence in one or more of the five criteria related to close reading. The criteria are:

- state the main concerns of the text;
- state individual items retrieved from the text;
- draw an inference from a key statement in the text;
- comment on an aspect of the author's point of view;
- identify features of the author's technique.

Across all levels of paper there were very few opportunities to display competence at 'stating the main concerns of the text' or 'commenting on the author's point of view'. Indeed in 1992 there were no questions at any level which required candidates to 'comment on the author's point of view'. The Foundation papers gave candidates the most opportunities to 'retrieve individual items from the text', particularly in 1992 when the majority of questions related to this criterion.

It is important to remember that there are differences across levels of paper and diets of examination in the number of opportunities given to candidates to achieve the criteria related to Close Reading.

Comparisons of performance on the criteria: Foundation paper

In both 1991 and 1992 the largest number of candidates were successful at 'stating individual items retrieved from the text' and the fewest were able to 'identify features of the author's technique'. In both years, the Foundation paper offered only one opportunity for pupils to 'state the main concerns of the text'. In 1991 only one third of pupils demonstrated competence in this criterion, whereas in 1992 76% showed competence.

Table 10 Distribution of performances in Close Reading Foundation Paper

Foundation Paper	1991 data % of opportunities achieved					1992 data % of opportunities achieved					No. of opportunities	
Criterion	0-20	21-40	41-60	61-80	81-100	0-20	21-40	41-60	61-80	81-100	*1991*	*1992*
State main concerns of the text	66	n/a	n/a	n/a	34	24	n/a	n/a	n/a	76	*1*	*1*
State individual items retrieved from text	0	2	9	32	57	1	0	2	16	80	*14*	*20*
Draw an inference from the text	0	2	13	30	54	1	1	13	37	49	*16*	*4*
Comment on the author's point of view	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	*0*	*0*
Identify features of the author's technique	24	39	n/a	28	9	9	18	28	40	4	*3*	*4*

n/a = there were not enough opportunities to achieve the criterion to enable a score for this band to be recorded

Comparisons of performance on the criteria: General paper

As with the Foundation paper, pupils were most successful at 'stating individual items retrieved from the text' and were least able to 'identify features of the author's technique'. In 1991 pupils also performed relatively less well at 'commenting on the author's point of view'; in 1992 they were not given the opportunity to achieve this criterion.

Further analysis showed that, unlike the full sample, pupils who were awarded grades 3 and 4 in 1991 achieved most success at 'stating the main concerns of the text'.

Table 11 Distribution of performances in Close Reading General paper

General Paper	1991 data % of opportunities achieved					1992 data % of opportunities achieved					No. of opportunities	
Criterion	0-20	21-40	41-60	61-80	81-100	0-20	21-40	41-60	61-80	81-100	*1991*	*1992*
State main concerns of the text	16	22	n/a	30	21	58	n/a	n/a	n/a	42	*3*	*1*
State individual items retrieved from text	4	19	30	33	15	1	2	25	24	48	*9*	*7*
Draw an inference from the text	9	17	24	34	16	9	30	33	22	6	*21*	*9*
Comment on the author's point of view	33	n/a	36	n/a	31	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	*2*	*0*
Identify features of the author's technique	14	37	18	25	5	15	29	30	20	6	*8*	*9*

n/a = there were not enough opportunities to achieve the criterion to enable a score for this band to be recorded

Comparisons of performance on the criteria: Credit paper

In both 1991 and 1992 pupils were best at 'stating individual items retrieved from the text'. In 1991 they had most difficulty in 'commenting on the author's point of view' and in 'identifying features of the author's technique', whereas in 1992 their poorest performance was in 'stating the main concerns of the text'.

Table 12 Distribution of performances in Close Reading Credit paper

	1991 data					1992 data						
Credit Paper	% of opportunities achieved										*No. of opportunities*	
Criterion	0-20	21-40	41-60	61-80	81-100	0-20	21-40	41-60	61-80	81-100	*1991*	*1992*
State main concerns of the text	18	31	n/a	30	21	63	n/a	27	n/a	11	*3*	*2*
State individual items retrieved from text	3	15	32	39	10	1	7	31	37	24	*11*	*4*
Draw an inference from the text	3	26	46	26	3	16	36	36	9	3	*17*	*11*
Comment on the author's point of view	69	n/a	n/a	n/a	31	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	*1*	*0*
Identify features of the author's technique	18	38	32	9	2	27	28	24	13	8	*12*	*6*

n/a = there were not enough opportunities to achieve the criterion to enable a score for this band to be recorded

It appears that at whatever level of paper candidates attempt, they do best at 'stating individual items retrieved from the text'. They perform less well, however, at criteria relating to 'technique' and when asked to 'comment on the author's point of view'.

There are, however, some apparent differences from one year to the next on these papers. Overall there was a statistically significant difference between the two Foundation papers from 1991 and 1992, with candidates in the 1992 sample being conspicuously more successful. Examination of the papers suggests that this may be due to the high proportion of items in the 1992 paper which were related to the criterion 'stating individual items retrieved from the text', and the suggestion that this is a criterion which candidates find it relatively easy to achieve.

Table 13 summarises, for each paper, and for candidates who achieved different final Standard Grade English awards, the criteria which they were most and least successful in achieving.

Table 13 *Close Reading Examination: summary of criteria performed 'best' and 'least well' by candidates who achieved different Standard Grade awards*

		1991 sample		1992 sample	
Final award	Level of paper	Criterion in which pupils performed best	Criterion in which pupils performed least well	Criterion in which pupils performed best	Criterion in which pupils performed least well
Grade 3	Credit	Individual items	Technique	Individual items	Main concerns
	General	Main concerns	Technique	Individual items	Technique
	Foundation	Individual items and Inference (tie)	Technique	Individual items	Technique
Grade 4	Credit	Individual items	Comment	Individual items	Main concerns
	General	Main concerns	Technique	Individual items	Technique
	Foundation	Individual items	Technique	Individual items	Technique
Grade 5	Credit	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	General	Individual items	Comment	Individual items	Main concerns
	Foundation	Individual items	Technique	Individual items	Technique
Grade 6	Credit	n/a	n/a	Insufficient number of cases for analysis	Insufficient number of cases for analysis
	General	Individual items	Comment		
	Foundation	Individual items	Main concerns		

n/a = an insufficient number of candidates sat this paper to allow analysis.

4 Performance in Writing

General comments on Writing

The writing element of Standard Grade is assessed through a writing examination and through a folio of the candidates' writing submitted by the school. The folio consists of two pieces of writing. The same extended grade-related criteria are used to assess both the examination and the folio pieces. These EGRC are shown in Appendix A.

Explanation of the criteria and the methods used.

There are eight grade-related criteria used in the marking of writing. These are defined at Foundation, General and Credit levels and 'differentiating factors' are given to allow distinctions to be made between grades at each level. In summary, candidates are expected to do the following:

- attend to the purpose of the task;
- convey information;
- present ideas and opinions;
- give an account of a personal experience;
- express personal feelings;
- use the conventions of a chosen literary form;
- write correctly and intelligibly;
- write at appropriate length.

The data available from the SEB consisted of a single overall grade award for the writing examination and another for the completed folio of each candidate in the sample. These were therefore holistic assessments of the candidates' performance on writing.

The researchers re-marked each examination script, and each piece in the folio, assigning to them a grade for each of the criteria. In addition an estimate was made by the researchers of the 'overall' grade for each piece.

In practice, however, it was found that not all writing tasks allow each of the criteria to be met. This was a particular problem with the criteria relating to 'presenting ideas and opinions', 'giving an account of a personal experience' and 'expressing personal feelings'. It was felt to be unfair to candidates to attempt to assign grades to their work in cases where the task they were set, or had chosen, did not expressly call for these criteria to be met.

We therefore have a set of generally applicable criteria against which all writing pieces were re-marked by the researchers. These criteria call on the candidates to:

- attend to the purpose of the task;
- convey information;
- use the conventions of a chosen literary form;
- write correctly and intelligibly;
- write at appropriate length.

In addition, in cases where candidates were asked to present some kind of argument or discussion of an issue (discursive writing) they were assigned a grade according to whether they could:

- present ideas and opinions.

For tasks where they were asked to give some kind of personal account or express their feelings on an issue, the candidates were also given a grade according to whether they could:

- give an account of a personal experience;
- express personal feelings.

These categories are not, of course, mutually exclusive, but they have been separated out for the purpose of analysis.

The Writing Folio

Overview of findings

In both the 1991 and 1992 samples the grades awarded by the SEB for the candidates' Writing Folio tended to be lower than those awarded for the Writing Examination. At first glance this would suggest that candidates are responding to the incentive of the examination by making an extra effort. However, these SEB grades for the folio are 'aggregates' of the grades for the two pieces in the folio. When we look at the better of the candidates' two performances in the folio we find that the situation is reversed: the candidates' best piece of writing tends to be contained in the folio. Their second folio piece then tends to let them down. It is the influence of this second folio piece which deflates the folio award given by the SEB.

For the purposes of the analysis which follows, it is the candidates' best performances in their folios which are used. This is in order to show what candidates who achieve different final Standard Grade awards are capable of achieving.

Comparison of performance on different criteria

Analysis of the candidates' performance on the individual criteria shows that, in both the 1991 and 1992 samples, they tended to perform best on the

criterion relating to 'conveying information' and worst on the criterion relating to the 'conventions of the chosen literary form'. Those candidates who chose to submit pieces which gave some account of a personal experience also performed badly on the criterion relating to 'expressing personal feelings'. Similarly, those who chose to submit a piece requiring a presentation of 'ideas and opinions' tended to perform badly on this criterion.

Figure 5 presents a series of profiles which show candidates' performance at each grade in the individual criteria in both the 1991 and 1992 writing folio. Only those criteria which are of general application are shown. The candidates are grouped according to the level of their final overall Standard Grade award.

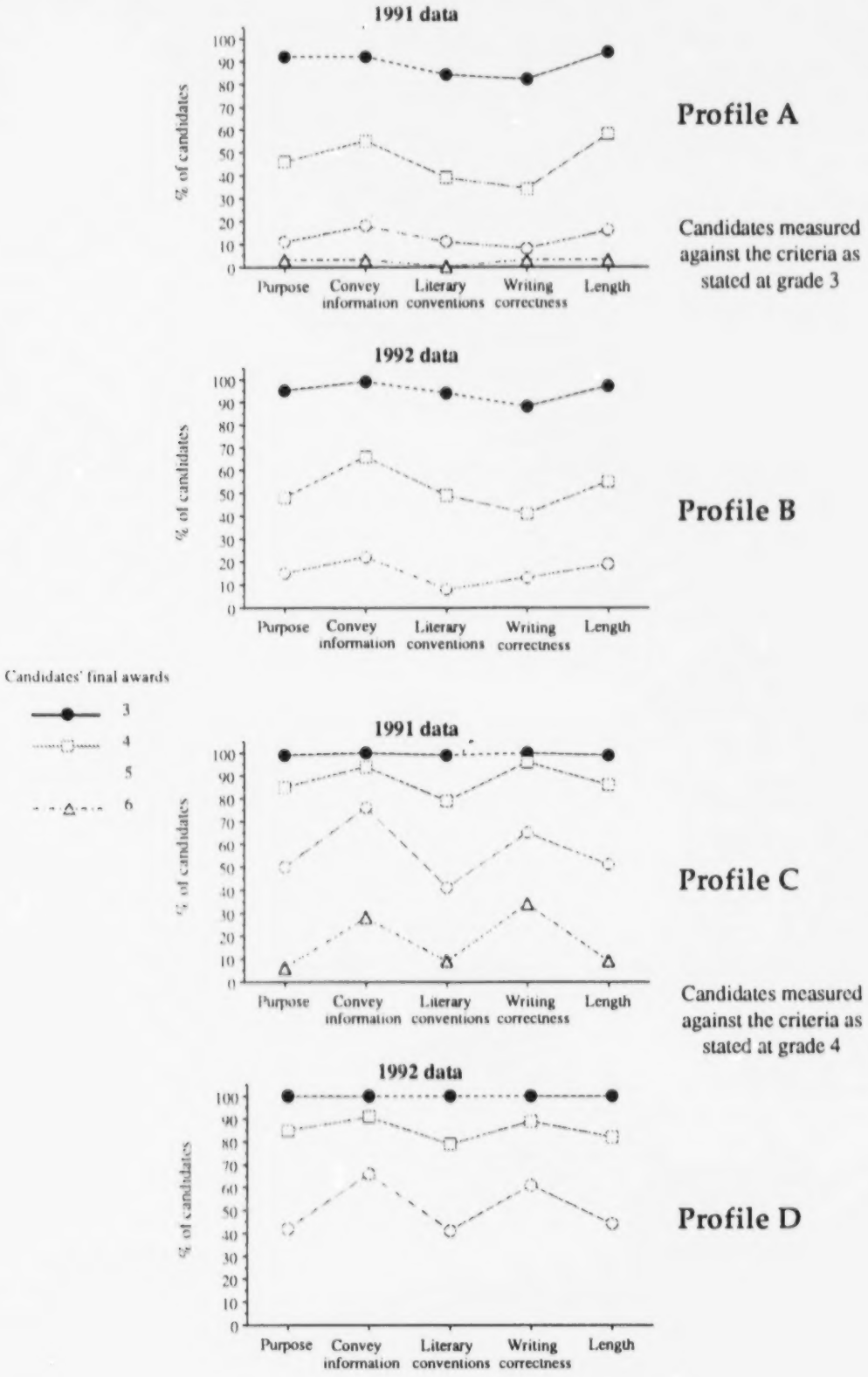
As an example of how to interpret these profiles, profile A shows the 1991 data on candidates who achieved at least a grade 3 on each individual criterion. The top line (filled circular markers) shows the percentage of those candidates whose final Standard Grade award was grade 3 who also achieved at least grade 3 for each criterion. The second line from the top (unfilled square markers) shows those candidates whose overall Standard Grade award was grade 4, but who managed to achieve at least grade 3 on these criteria. Profile A, as a whole, therefore presents a picture of how 1991 candidates, whose final Standard Grade award was at different levels, fared when they were measured against grade 3 criteria. Note that in 1992 there was an insufficient sample of candidates whose final award was at grade 6 to allow for any analysis.

The general shape of the 1991 profiles matches that of the 1992 profiles (allowing for the lack of candidates who were awarded grade 6 in 1992), suggesting a consistent pattern of achievement from one year to the next. There is also clear separation between candidates whose final Standard Grade award was at different grades, and this is true for all the criteria.

In general, the pattern of the findings from the analysis of the writing folio is very similar to that which was found for the writing exam (see below). The patterns are consistent across both samples, and the grades of the candidates are clearly separated out. Performance on all of the criteria tends to be higher than it was for the writing exam (but it should be borne in mind that these data are from the better of the two folio pieces).

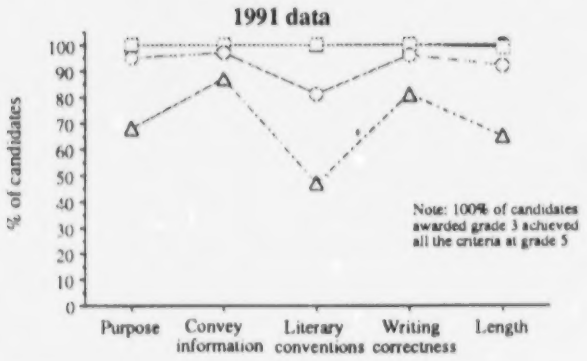
There is a general tendency for the 'peaks' to occur against the criteria for 'conveying information' and 'writing correctness'. Further analysis revealed that 'conveying information' was indeed generally well performed by candidates (relative to their performance against other criteria) in their folio, as it was in the examination papers. However, the graphs presented here mask some more subtle differences.

Figure 5 Comparisons of performance in the writing folio criteria

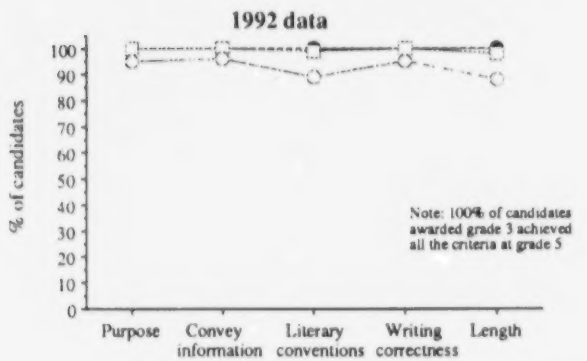


Profile E

Candidates measured against the criteria as stated at grade 5

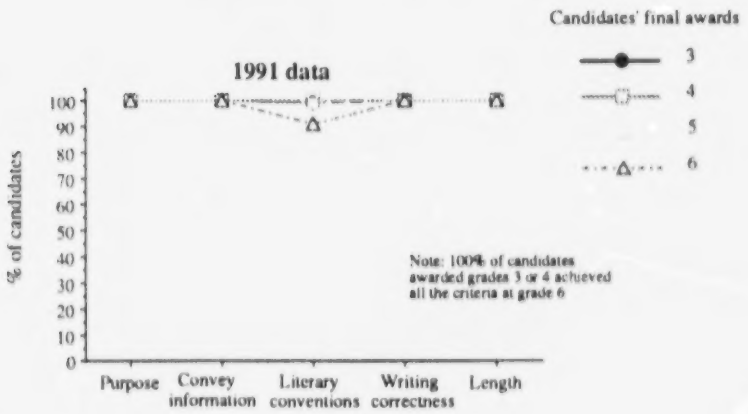


Profile F

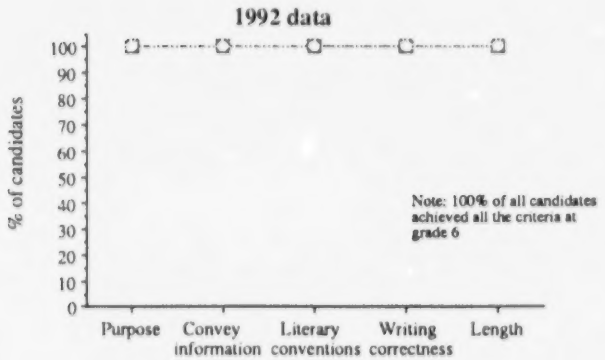


Profile G

Candidates measured against the criteria as stated at grade 6



Profile H



Candidates whose final overall Standard Grade award is at grade 3 show one difference from the other candidates in the sample, although it is not immediately obvious from the graphs. The grades 4, 5 and (in 1991 only) 6 candidates achieve some of their poorest grades for their performance on the criterion relating to 'use of conventions of a chosen literary form'. However for grade 3 candidates this criterion is not statistically significantly different from their performance in other criteria. Put more simply, this may imply that one of the distinguishing features of candidates who achieve a grade 3 overall Standard Grade award is that they have a surer grasp of literary conventions than others.

Table 14 shows a summary of those criteria which were performed best and least well in the writing folio by candidates who achieved different Standard Grade awards.

***Table 14** Writing Folio: summary of criteria performed 'best' and 'least well' by candidates who achieved different Standard Grade awards*

		1991 sample		1992 sample	
Final award	Type of writing	Criterion in which pupils performed best	Criterion in which pupils performed least well	Criterion in which pupils performed best	Criterion in which pupils performed least well
Grade 3	General	nsd	nsd	nsd	nsd
	Personal account	nsd	nsd	Length	Personal feelings
	Discursive writing	nsd	nsd	Length	Ideas and opinions
Grade 4	General	nsd	nsd	nsd	nsd
	Personal account	Convey information	Personal feelings	Convey information	Personal feelings
	Discursive writing	Convey information	Ideas and opinions	Convey information	Ideas and opinions
Grade 5	General	Convey information	Literary conventions	Convey information	Literary conventions
	Personal account	Convey information	Personal feelings	Convey information	Personal feelings
	Discursive writing	Convey information	Literary conventions	Convey information	Ideas and opinions
Grade 6	General	Convey information	Literary conventions	Insufficient number of cases for analysis	Insufficient number of cases for analysis
	Personal account	nsd	nsd		
	Discursive writing	nsd	nsd		

The Writing Examination.

Overview of findings.

Of the three papers which are both externally marked and directly graded by the SEB, candidates tended to achieve their best grades in the writing examination, their worst grades in the extended responses to reading

folio, and to fall somewhere in between in the grades they achieved for their writing folio. This finding must, however, be treated with some caution as researcher analysis of the contents of the writing folio suggests that candidates better folio pieces can achieve better grades than their examination grades, but that the general tendency is for this only to apply to their better piece and the achievement is not repeated in the second of the two folio pieces. The Writing Examination, therefore, does not necessarily contain the candidates' 'best' writing.

The close reading papers are not directly comparable as they are assigned numerical marks which are later converted to grades, while the Individual Talk and Discussion grades are awarded on the basis of teacher assessment.

Comparison of performance on different criteria

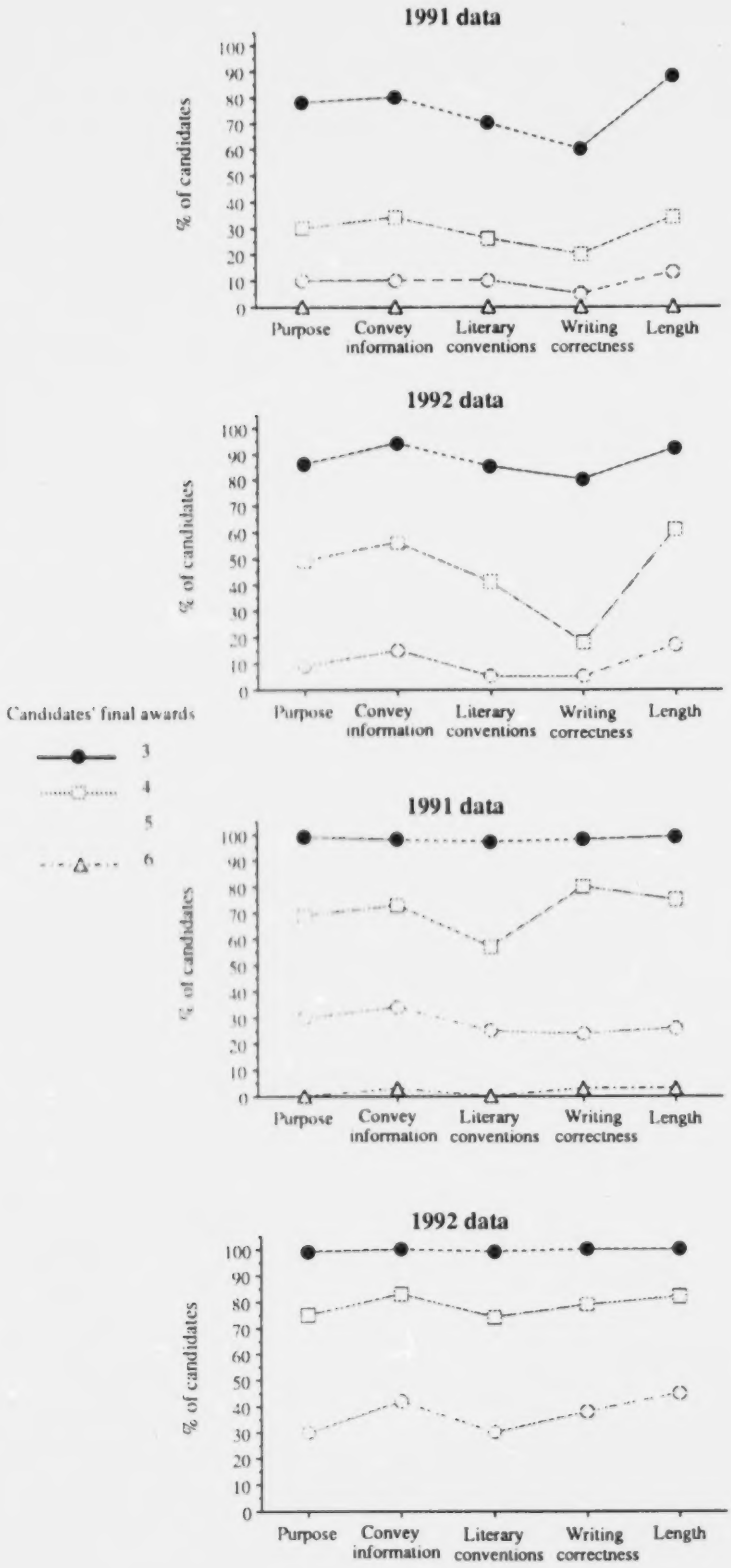
Analysis of the grades awarded to the candidates for each of the criteria suggests that, in the samples for both the 1991 and 1992 Writing Examinations, they were most successful in the criteria relating to 'conveying information' and writing to an 'appropriate length'. Of the criteria which are applicable to all pieces of writing, candidates tended to do less well in the criteria relating to 'using the conventions of a chosen literary form' and 'writing correctness'.

Where candidates chose to attempt a task which asked for some kind of expression of personal feelings or to give a personal account, they did relatively poorly. This applied to both the 1991 and 1992 samples.

Data concerning candidates' performance on the criterion relating to 'ideas and opinions' are much more difficult to interpret. In the 1991 sample candidates performed relatively well on this criterion (compared to their performance on other criteria). However, in 1992 the number who chose to attempt a task which demanded that this criterion be met was too small to allow conclusions to be drawn. Other data from the writing folio, which is discussed above, complicates the interpretation of the candidates' performance on this criterion.

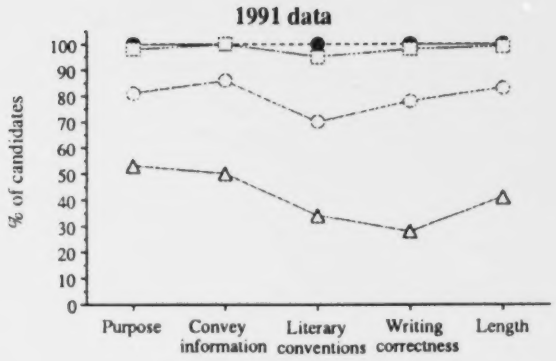
Figure 6 presents a series of graphs which show candidates' performance at each grade in the individual criteria in both the 1991 and 1992 Writing Examination. Only those criteria which are of general application are shown. The candidates are grouped according to the level of their final overall Standard Grade award.

Figure 6 Comparisons of performance in the writing examination criteria

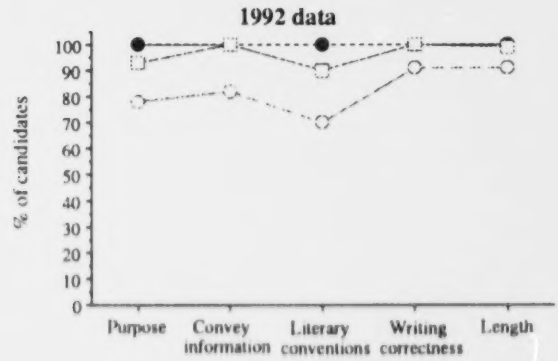


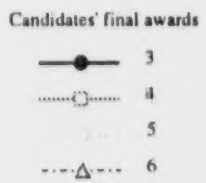
Profile E

Candidates measured against the criteria as stated at grade 5



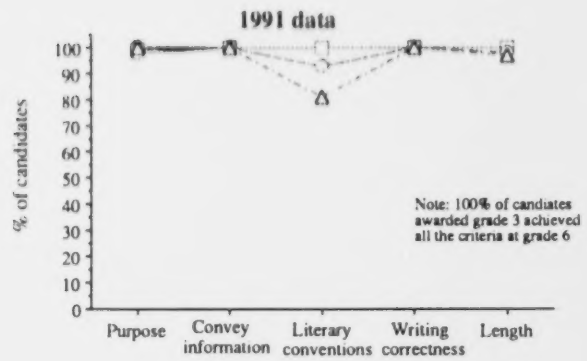
Profile F



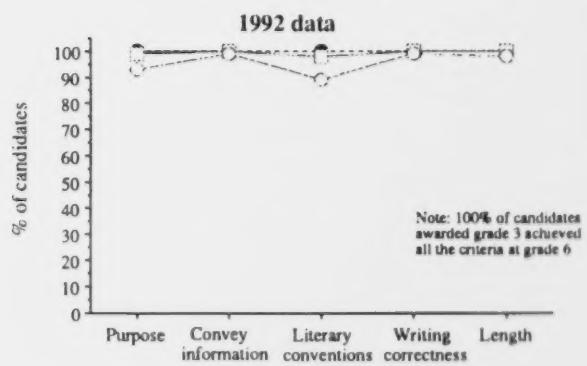


Profile G

Candidates measured against the criteria as stated at grade 6



Profile H



We can see that the general shape of each of the 1991 profiles is similar to the corresponding 1992 profile (when allowance is made for the absence of candidates who were awarded a grade 6 in 1992). This would suggest that there are reasonably consistent patterns of performance on the different criteria which hold from one year to the next.

There are, however, some differences. A comparison of Profile A and Profile B, for example, suggests that a higher proportion of grade 3 and 4 candidates achieved some of the criteria in 1992 (that is, the lines for these groups are higher up the graph) In fact, further statistical analysis shows that in 1992 the sample as a whole performed better than the 1991 sample on the criteria relating to 'conveying information', and 'length'. The difference between the 1991 and 1992 samples on these criteria was statistically significant.

The profiles also show a clear separation between candidates who achieved different grades in the final Standard Grade award. In other words, those who achieved grade 3 performed consistently better than those who achieve grade 4, who in turn performed better than those who achieve grade 5. This is a consistent pattern which holds true for all the criteria. This is as we would expect, but it is reassuring to see that the performances on the individual criteria are in line with the final award.

Table 15 shows a summary of those criteria performed 'best' and 'least well' by candidates who achieved different levels of final award.

Table 15 *Writing Examination: summary of criteria performed 'best' and 'least well' by candidates who achieved different Standard Grade awards*

		1991 sample		1992 sample	
Final award	Type of writing	Criterion in which pupils performed best	Criterion in which pupils performed least well	Criterion in which pupils performed best	Criterion in which pupils performed least well
Grade 3	General	Length	Writing	nsd	nsd
	Personal account	nsd	nsd	nsd	nsd
	Discursive writing	nsd	nsd	nsd	nsd
Grade 4	General	nsd	nsd	Length	Writing correctness
	Personal account	nsd	nsd	Convey information and Length (tie)	Writing correctness
	Discursive writing	nsd	nsd	nsd	nsd
Grade 5	General	Convey information	Literary conventions	Length	Literary conventions
	Personal account	Convey information	Personal feelings	Convey information	Literary conventions
	Discursive writing	nsd	nsd	nsd	nsd
Grade 6	General	nsd	nsd	Insufficient number of cases for analysis	Insufficient number of cases for analysis
	Personal account	nsd	nsd		
	Discursive writing	nsd	nsd		

nsd = no significant difference between performance on different criteria was identified

Comparison between folio and examination

Comparison of the criteria performed 'best' and 'least well' in the folio and examination by candidates who achieved different final grades initially suggests that there are different patterns of achievement. However, visual inspection of the profiles in Figures 5 and 6 will show that the overall patterns remain similar. There is a tendency for 'writing correctness' to be achieved at Grade 3 by fewer candidates in the examination in both years. In the 1991 sample candidates whose final award was at Grade 6 were more likely to achieve Grade 5 for all writing criteria in their folio than in the examination.

In the sample as a whole the major difference is in the area of 'discursive' writing in the 1991 sample where 'ideas and opinions' was the criterion performed 'least well' in the folio but 'best' in the examination (by those who chose a task which demanded this type of writing). We cannot confirm it from our data, but our hypothesis is that this is an effect of one particular essay question which prompted candidates towards addressing this criterion. Outside of the Close Reading paper this is the only example we have found where a 'question effect' may be influencing the performance of candidates.

5 Performance in Talking

The Talking element of Standard Grade English is made up from the candidates' performance on Individual Talk and Discussion, for which separate sets of EGRC exist (see Appendix A).

The criteria for Individual Talk cover:

- content
- purpose
- language
- expression
- awareness of audience
- duration.

While those for Discussion cover:

- substance and relevance of contribution
- account taken of other contributions
- awareness of situation
- control of expression.

Talking is entirely teacher-assessed, and teachers are only required to supply the SEB with their overall estimate for the element as a whole (they do not have to submit separate estimates for Individual Talk and Discussion). However, for the purposes of this research, the teachers of the classroom sub-sample were asked to provide separate estimates for Individual Talk and Discussion. They were also asked to grade the sample candidates according to the individual criteria within the EGRC. The estimates which teachers supplied for Individual Talk are shown in Table 16, while those for Discussion are shown in Table 17. Individual Talk was the area of Standard Grade in which the teachers thought that the classroom sample could perform best out of all the areas they were asked to provide estimates for.

In both Individual Talk and Discussion there are no statistically significant differences between the distributions of the teachers' estimates for different criteria. The sample sizes are relatively small, and did not allow the sample to be grouped according to their final Standard Grade awards.

***Table 16** Teachers' estimates of grades in Individual Talk*

Criterion	Grade 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	No of Cases
Content	0	0	24	44	33	0	0	46
Purpose	0	0	26	39	35	0	0	46
Language	0	0	20	48	26	6	0	46
Expression	0	0	26	44	28	2	0	46
Awareness of audience	0	0	27	49	22	2	0	45
Duration	0	0	37	42	10	10	0	19
Overall	0	0	25	43	29	3	0	65

***Figure 7** Distribution of grades for Individual Talk*

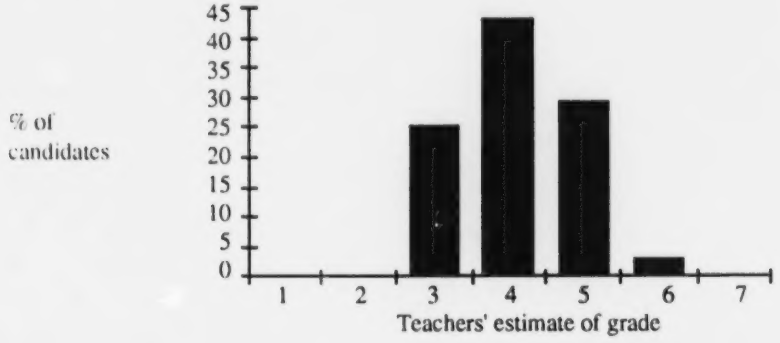
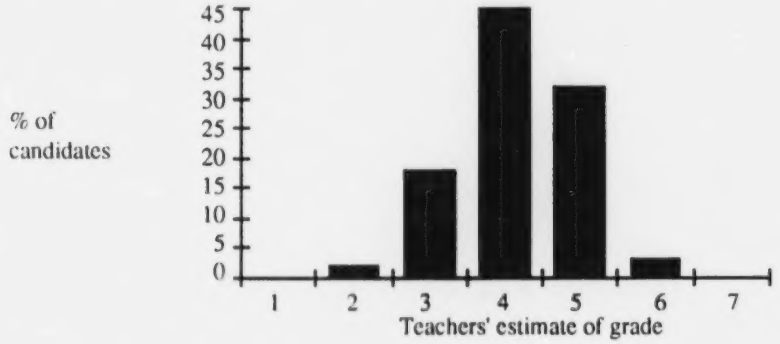


Table 17 Teachers' estimates of grades in Discussion

Criterion	Grade 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	No of Cases
Substance and relevance	0	0	17	50	28	4	0	46
Account taken of other contributions	0	0	15	52	30	2	0	46
Awareness of situation	0	0	13	52	33	2	0	46
Control of expression	0	0	17	52	26	5	0	42
Overall	0	2	18	45	32	3	0	65

***Figure 8** Distribution of grades for Discussion*



It was possible for the researchers to make individual assessments of a sub-sample of twenty-three of these candidates in Discussion during the time that they spent in the schools. Their estimates of the candidates' overall performance on Discussion did not show any statistically significant difference from the overall estimates made by the teachers. However, the researchers' estimates of the candidates' performance on the individual criteria did reveal statistically significant differences between the criteria, with that for 'substance and relevance of the contribution' being performed better than the other criteria.

6 Knowledge about language: technical terms used in English

Knowledge about Language is not explicitly assessed in Standard Grade English, and it was not possible for this project to obtain any objective information on the degree of 'knowledge about language' possessed by the sample candidates without implementing separate assessments designed to obtain such information. This was felt to be impractical for both the research team and the schools involved.

However, in order to obtain some information on this subject, teachers of the classroom sample of candidates were presented with a list of technical terms used in English and asked whether, in their opinion, each of the classroom sample would have encountered these terms; would know and understand them; and would be able to use them accurately. The list represented a range of critical terms; grammatical and syntactical terms; rhetorical terms; and other general linguistic terms. They were presented in groups of three. Each group was intended to be typical of a particular area of knowledge about language at a particular level of sophistication (e.g. basic grammatical terms such as noun, verb and adjective through to more sophisticated rhetorical terms such as euphemism, hyperbole and paradox). These groupings are inevitably a matter of judgement.

The information we have therefore represents the views of teachers on whether a group of candidates who achieved below-average grades in Standard Grade English would have been likely to have encountered, understood and accurately used a range of critical and linguistic terminology. The results are shown in Table18.

We can see that most of these candidates are thought to have been likely to have encountered most of the terms in the list, that they are thought to be less likely to know and understand them, and that they are least likely to be able to use them accurately. This is a pattern which could easily have been predicted.

It is interesting, however, to reflect on this table in the light of our earlier findings with regard to 'critical evaluations' in the Reading folio. There we discovered that one of the criteria which was found to be more difficult for candidates was that on 'awareness of technique and use of critical terminology'. There was a suggestion that candidates found it particularly difficult to go beyond grade 5 (where they are asked to 'identify one or two features of technique' in 'simple non-technical language') and to achieve grade 4 (where they have to 'explain their effects' and use 'basic critical terminology'). The views of these teachers would seem to confirm that they recognise that this is an area where these candidates are less likely to perform well.

Table 18 Teachers' estimates of the knowledge and use of technical terms in English

Pupils have encountered terms	%	Pupils know and understand terms	%	Pupils use terms accurately	%	
noun, verb, adjective	100					91-100%
character, setting, mouve	100					
metaphor, simile, imagery	100					
singular/plural, tense, masculine/feminine	100					
rhyme, rhythm, metre	100					
quotation marks, apostrophe, punctuation	100	quotation marks, apostrophe, punctuation	98			
slang, dialect, accent	87					81-90%
argument, opinion, account	87					
tone, atmoshere, mood	87					
statement, conversation, debate	87					
grammar, syntax, vocabulary	87					
audibility, clarity, coherence	87					
narrative, plot, theme	85	slang, dialect, accent	85			
pronoun, article, conjunction	85	singular/plural, tense, masculine/feminine	82	quotation marks, apostrophe, punctuation	82	
alliteration, onomatopoeia, prosody	74	character, setting, mouve	80	character, setting, mouve	80	71-80%
topic, detail, illustration	74	noun, verb, adjective	80	slang, dialect, accent	78	
		rhyme, rhythm, metre	72			
		argument, opinion, account	70			61-70%
		statement, conversation, debate	68			
sarcasm, irony, satire	66	narrative, plot, theme	63			
subject, predicate, clause	62	audibility, clarity, coherence	61			
				noun, verb, adjective	60	51-60%
				singular/plural, tense, masculine/feminine	59	
		metaphor, simile, imagery	59	narrative, plot, theme	56	
		topic, detail, illustration	52	argument, opinion, account	56	
root, prefix, suffix	53	grammar, syntax, vocabulary	52	rhyme, rhythm, metre	54	
				statement, conversation, debate	50	41-50%
				audibility, clarity, coherence	48	
				metaphor, simile, imagery	43	
		sarcasm, irony, satire	39			31-40%
		pronoun, article, conjunction	39			
		tone, atmoshere, mood	39			
		alliteration, onomatopoeia, prosody	28	tone, atmoshere, mood	30	21-30%
				grammar, syntax, vocabulary	28	
				alliteration, onomatopoeia, prosody	23	
euphemism, hyperbole, paradox	23			topic, detail, illustration	21	
		euphemism, hyperbole, paradox	20	pronoun, article, conjunction	19	11-21%
		subject, predicate, clause	15	sarcasm, irony, satire	16	
		root, prefix, suffix	11			
				root, prefix, suffix	6	0-10%
				subject, predicate, clause	2	
				euphemism, hyperbole, paradox	0	

7 Points for discussion

Patterns of results

One of the most striking features of the findings of this project was the consistency of the patterns of achievement apparent in the analysis of candidates' performance. Within each element of the Standard Grade it appeared that candidates who achieved different overall Standard Grade awards were clearly separated, as could be seen in the distinct 'bands' apparent in the profiles presented earlier. For each element the patterns of 'peaks and troughs' also tended to be similar. There was, by and large, consistency between the 1991 and 1992 samples in terms of the relative success of candidates on particular elements of the Standard Grade and on individual criteria within those elements.

It appeared, for example, that if a particular criterion was found to be relatively difficult for candidates who achieved a grade 4, it would also be relatively difficult for candidates who achieved different final grades, but that this difficulty was in proportion to their final award. The relative difficulty of individual criteria (as measured by the numbers of candidates who were successful in achieving them) tended to remain consistent across all grades of final award and from one year to the next.

What are the implications for teachers of the identification of criteria which candidates at all grades find particularly difficult?

Classroom concerns

Criteria performed best and worst

In Chapter Two we summarised those criteria with which candidates appeared to have relatively little difficulty and those that appeared to cause them most difficulty. We noted that in Reading candidates consistently performed better on those criteria relating to extracting individual items of information from a text and to stating the main ideas of a text. However, they seemed to have much more trouble in demonstrating an awareness of the literary techniques used in the texts.

In Writing, candidates tended to be most successful in conveying information, but were much less successful in making use of literary conventions. Candidates were also relatively unsuccessful in meeting the criteria set by those specialised tasks which required them to express their personal feelings or present their own ideas and opinions.

The information available on the candidates' performance in Talking did not enable us to draw any conclusions about their relative performance in individual criteria.

It is interesting to note that in both reading and writing these candidates appeared to have relatively little difficulty in dealing with the straightforward informational content of the text which they were either reading or constructing, but that it was the more 'literary' or 'technical' criteria which caused them problems. It was this lack of analysis which marked out these candidates' performances. The ability to analyse becomes increasingly important in meeting the criteria at General and Credit levels, and this may be one area where further attention would significantly enhance the performance of these candidates.

Is candidates' relative lack of success in meeting certain criteria best tackled by addressing those criteria directly or developing some more general 'analytic' skill?

Folio - need for consistency

In Chapter Four it was noted that there tended to be an inconsistency in the standards achieved by the two pieces included in the Writing Folio. Frequently one of the two pieces would demonstrate a lower level of achievement than the other. The effect of this was to lower the grade given for the folio which did not then represent the best work of which the candidate was capable. If teachers wish to enhance the awards of their pupils this is an area where improvements are possible.

We have also noted that candidates tended to do relatively badly in those 'specialised' criteria which were only applicable to certain types of writing. That is, they did relatively poorly when asked to express their personal feelings or present their own ideas and opinions. Because of the requirements of the folio, candidates have to attempt at least one piece of work which demands that one or other of these criteria be met.

To do well on these criteria candidates must go beyond 'bald statement' by attempting some degree of objectivity about their feelings and trying to reason about their ideas and opinions. This also demands a level of analytical sophistication which tended to be missing from the performance of these candidates.

In the Reading Folio the major point to note is that those candidates who elected to include an Imaginative Response tended not to do it well. There may be a tendency to regard the Imaginative Response as an 'easy option' but this is not the case if it is to be done well. Indeed, a good Imaginative Response (as defined by the EGRC) demands those very powers of analysis and literary awareness which were absent from the performance of many of these candidates.

What can teachers do to encourage candidates to demonstrate their full abilities in a range of folio submissions?

Examination concerns

The EGRC framework

The consistency of the patterns of results, and the clear separation of

candidates who achieved different final Standard Grade awards, suggests that the framework supplied by the EGRC works well as a means of identifying the level of achievement of these candidates. If this separation had not been evident there might have been a case for suggesting that the EGRC were in some way unclear, or difficult to apply, but this was not the case.

However, this very consistency suggests two possibilities which would be worth examining more closely. The first is that the EGRC for each element of Standard Grade are being used 'holistically' and that there is a 'halo effect' apparent in the marking of any one paper. There is further support for this possibility in the teachers' estimates of the candidates' performance, where no statistically significant differences between any of the relevant criteria were apparent. Indeed, SEB guidance to teachers is that marking should be done on a 'holistic' basis.

The researchers, however, strove to assess the candidates' work against individual criteria, and to disregard assessments made against other criteria. The fact that the researchers' estimates of the candidates' performance did reveal statistically significant differences between performance in different criteria would tend to suggest that they have been at least partially successful in achieving this end. Nevertheless, it is possible that a 'halo effect' was at work even here so that there may have been a tendency for assessments against one criterion to be affected by previous assessments against other criteria. This would tend to exaggerate the consistency of the apparent patterns.

The second possibility is that there is some underlying factor which governs candidates' ability in Standard Grade English. This may be a 'general ability in English' factor, or possibly separate factors governing particular sub-abilities in English. The degree of consistency suggests that there may be some 'general ability in English' factor at work. However, in order to test this thoroughly a considerable amount of further analysis of the data from this project would require to be undertaken.

To what extent can individual criteria in English be addressed separately? Is it appropriate - or even possible - to regard individual criteria in isolation?

Coverage of criteria

In the parallel study of Mathematics which accompanies this report considerable difficulty was encountered because the examination papers could only sample the relatively large number of criteria identified within Standard Grade Mathematics. This meant that a different sub-set of the criteria would be assessed in different examinations. This difficulty hardly arose at all in Standard Grade English, with the notable exception of the Close Reading Examination paper. At least one reason for this may be that fewer individual criteria are identified in English.

The researchers' analysis of the demands being made by the examination papers identified a small number of exceptions. There were no instances,

at any level, in the 1992 papers where candidates were asked to 'comment on the author's point of view'. It was also apparent that in the 1992 Foundation Level Close Reading Paper there were a large number of opportunities for candidates to 'retrieve individual items from the text' and comparatively few opportunities to meet other criteria. Since this is a criterion on which candidates appear to perform relatively well, this could have had an effect on their overall mark for this paper (Close Reading being the one instance where candidates are given marks which are then converted to grades, rather than being directly graded, the number of opportunities to meet any criterion will affect the weighting given to that criterion).

Do the tasks set for candidates, and the questions being asked of them, always reflect the full range of criteria?

Changes to the grade-related criteria

5-14 links?

One of the aims of this project was to make suggestions about any changes which may be required to the grade-related criteria for Standard Grade English. As we have noted above, the EGRC for Standard Grade English appear to be working well as an assessment tool and, from that point of view, we would not suggest that any changes are necessary to them.

We have noted that there is a very small proportion of candidates whose final award is at grade 6. It might be, therefore, that the appropriateness of the EGRC at this grade may be questioned. Much depends, however, on the purpose of the EGRC. If it is the case that the criteria laid out in the EGRC are to be regarded as 'absolute standards' against which candidates are to be measured, then there should be no problem caused by the fact that so many of the candidates achieve grades better than grade 6. In this interpretation the absence of Grade 6 awards may simply mean that almost all candidates do 'better' than perform at this level.

One other factor should, however, be taken into account, and that is the existence of the attainment targets for 5-14 English Language. It was not part of the purpose of this project to conduct an analysis of the degree of articulation between 5-14 attainment targets and Standard Grade EGRC. It may be that now is the time for such an analysis to be undertaken.

Standard Grade EGRC and 5-14 attainment targets are organised in different ways, and comparison between them is not straightforward but, for purposes of illustration, the EGRC and attainment targets for writing are presented in Table 19 in parallel columns.

Notice, for example, that while the Standard Grade EGRC require candidates only to 'make a bald statement of personal feelings or reactions' at Foundation level, the nearest corresponding 5-14 attainment target at Level E asks for more than this by requiring that pupils show 'some capacity to reflect on experience'. Other similar examples of 5-14 Level E being seemingly more demanding than Standard Grade Foundation level are also apparent.

It may be that this degree of overlap between the 5-14 attainment targets and the Standard Grade EGRC is intentional and in some ways useful (as not all pupils will attain Level E, but almost all will sit Standard Grade). However, it may raise questions for teachers who are trying to reconcile the demands being made on them with the needs and abilities of their pupils. An analysis which would be particularly useful, and which might shed light on the acceptability of grade 6 criteria, would be to explore the 5-14 levels at which grade 6 criteria are manifested.

What is the relationship between Standard Grade EGRC and 5-14 attainment targets?

***Table 19** 5-14 attainment targets in Writing, Level E, compared with Standard Grade Writing EGRC*

5-14 Strands	5-14 Level E attainment targets	Standard Grade Foundation Level EGRC
Functional writing	Write in a variety of forms to communicate key events, facts, points of view and ideas, using appropriate organisation and specialist vocabulary.	The work shows a few signs of appropriateness and commitment to the purposes of the writing tasks. As the task requires, the candidate can:
Personal writing	Write about personal experiences in a variety of formats, demonstrating some capacity to reflect on experience and with some grasp of appropriate style.	convey simple information; present ideas and opinions in concrete personal terms;
Punctuation and structure	In the writing task above, construct, punctuate and link sentences of different lengths, and organise them in paragraphs in order to shape meaning.	Display rudimentary awareness of the more obvious conventions of a chosen literary form, and occasionally attempt to use language to achieve particular effects. A combination of these may be called for by any one task.
Spelling	In the writing tasks above, spell accurately most of the words they need to use, including specialist terminology.	Writing communicates meaning largely at first reading: however, some further reading is necessary because of obtrusive formal errors and/or structural weaknesses, including inaccurate sentence construction and poor vocabulary.
Handwriting and presentation	In the writing tasks above, employ a fluent, legible style of handwriting, and set out completed work clearly and attractively.	
Knowledge about language	Show that they know, understand and can use at least the following terms: main point, topic sentence, evidence; subject, predicate, clause; question marks, apostrophe; punctuation.	100 words is to be taken as a rough guide as to the minimum length for each finished piece of work, but the overriding consideration should be that the length is appropriate to the purposes of the writing task [Standard Grade 'differentiating factors' omitted]

Different purposes of assessment

The suggestion from the data is that the Standard Grade EGRC are providing a reasonable framework for the assessment of English in that they appear to differentiate consistently between different levels of achievement.

Assessment, however, may be for different purposes. While Standard Grade EGRC may meet the requirements of summative assessment for certification, this does not guarantee that they will be equally useful for teachers who wish to gather assessment information for formative purposes as an aid in planning their teaching. The evidence from the teachers' estimates gathered by the project suggests that teachers are tending not to assess on the basis of individual criteria, but are making 'holistic' judgements. We would suggest that the appropriate focus for formative assessment would be at the more detailed level of the individual criteria. With 'holistic' judgements it may be all too easy to overlook - or disregard - the fact that many of these candidates are having more difficulty with some criteria than with others. If teachers value these individual criteria as things which their pupils should learn, then they deserve a degree of individual attention.

Should teachers be encouraged to concentrate more on assessing individual criteria for formative purposes?

Appendices

Appendix A

The extended grade-related criteria

Critical Evaluations

CREDIT		GENERAL		FOUNDATION	
As appropriate to the purpose of the assignment, the candidate can:		As appropriate to the purpose of the assignment, the candidate can:		As appropriate to the purpose of the assignment, the candidate can:	
display a thorough familiarity with the text(s): this appears, for example, in the analysis of its main ideas and purposes and through detailed reference to relevant areas of content; he or she shows an ability to relate detail to the overall context of the work(s) studied		display an acceptable familiarity with the text(s): this appears in a statement of its main ideas and purposes and through reference to some relevant areas of content; he or she shows some ability to relate detail to the overall context of the work(s) studied		display some familiarity with the text(s): this appears in the statement of one or two of its main ideas and/or purposes and through reference to one or two relevant areas of content; he or she shows a little ability to relate detail to the overall context of the work(s) studied	
1. Analysis of main ideas and purposes is thorough-going and precise.	2. Analysis of main ideas and purposes is full but less penetrating than at grade 1.	3. The statement of main ideas and purposes is reasonably comprehensive and accurate.	4. The statement of main ideas and purposes is less complete or less correct than at grade 3.	5. The statement of main ideas and/or purposes displays a basic grasp.	6. The candidate's grasp of main ideas and/or purposes is tenuous.
give a perceptive and developed account of what he or she has enjoyed in and/or gained from the text(s): this clearly conveys the sense of a genuine personal response and is substantiated by reference to pertinent features of the text(s)		make a reasonably developed statement about aspects of the text(s) which have affected him or her: this conveys the sense of a genuine personal response and is accompanied by some reference to pertinent features of the text(s)		make a statement about at least one aspect of the text(s) that has affected him or her: this conveys traces of a genuine personal response	
1. The account of personal reaction displays a high level of sensitivity and self-awareness.	2. The account of personal reaction is discerning but less fully realised than at grade 1.	3. The statement of personal reaction displays a degree of insight.	4. The statement of personal reaction is more superficial and generalised than at grade 3.	5. The statement of personal reaction is brief but clear.	6. The statement of personal reaction lacks clarity but conveys a recognisable stance in relation to the text(s).
demonstrate awareness of technique by analysis, using critical terminology where appropriate: this appears in full and perceptive explication of stylistic devices substantiated by detailed reference to the text(s) and, where appropriate, apt quotation		identify individual features of technique and explain their effects, using basic critical terminology where appropriate: this involves the brief explication of obvious stylistic devices and is accompanied by some reference to the text(s) and/or quotation		identify one or two features of technique which contribute to some obvious effect: this is accompanied by some reference to the text(s) and/or quotation	
1. Use of critical terminology is confident and accurate.	2. Use of critical terminology is generally accurate but occasionally lacks the sureness of touch characteristic of grade 1.	3. Use of basic critical terminology is reasonably assured.	4. Use of basic critical terminology falters on occasion.	5. Awareness of technique is conveyed explicitly in simple, non-technical language.	6. Awareness of technique is detectable, but tends to appear implicitly.
organise response in such a way as to reflect, accurately, the purpose and nature of the assignment: this appears in an ability to select what is relevant in the text(s) and give due weight and prominence to what is important; the response is a substantial one but not normally exceeding 800 words		organise response so as to take some account of the purpose and nature of the assignment: most of what is selected from the text(s) is relevant and adequate attention is given to what is important; response is a reasonably extended one, probably between 300 and 800 words		display some signs of awareness of the purpose and nature of the assignment: some of what is selected from the text(s) is relevant and a degree of attention is given to what is important; the response is at least 100 words in length.	
1. There is an overall proportion and coherence in the structure of the response.	2. Everything relevant to purpose of assignment but there is some disproportion of constituent parts.	3. There is clear reference, throughout, to the purpose of the assignment.	4. A sense of the purpose of the assignment is present but not explicitly acknowledged throughout.	5. There is at least one explicit reference to the purpose of the assignment.	6. Awareness of the purpose appears briefly and/or implicitly.

Imaginative Responses

CREDIT		GENERAL		FOUNDATION	
The candidate can display, as appropriate, a thorough familiarity with the text(s) through		The candidate can display, as appropriate, an acceptable familiarity with the text(s) through		The candidate can display, as appropriate, some familiarity with the text(s) through	
detailed allusion to relevant areas of content,		allusion to some relevant areas of content,		allusion to one or two relevant areas of content	
sustained attention to the main ideas and purposes,		some attention to the main ideas and purposes,		and recognition of one or two of the main ideas and purposes.	
and sensitive evocation of mood and tone;		and occasional evocation of mood and tone;			
awareness of technique appears through skilled deployment of appropriate stylistic devices.		some awareness of technique appears through the use of more obvious stylistic devices.			
Organisation accurately reflects the purpose and nature of the assignment.		Organisation takes some account of the purpose and nature of the assignment.		There are some signs that account has been taken of the purpose and nature of the assignment.	
1. The candidate is confident and accomplished in the use of the chosen literary medium.	2.There are occasional lapses in the candidate's control of the chosen literary medium.	3. The candidate displays some skill in using the chosen literary medium.	4. The candidate is less confident in using the chosen literary medium.	5. The candidate displays limited skill in using the chosen literary medium	6. The candidate displays very little skill in using the chosen literary medium
The writing consistently demonstrates: familiarity with the text(s); awareness of technique; powers of organisation.	The writing demonstrates a high level of: familiarity with the text(s); awareness of technique; powers of organisation.	There is clear evidence of: familiarity with the text(s); awareness of technique; powers of organisation.	There is some evidence of: familiarity with the text(s); awareness of technique; powers of organisation.	There is a little evidence of: familiarity with the text(s); awareness of technique; powers of organisation.	There are fleeting signs of: familiarity with the text(s); awareness of technique; powers of organisation.

Close Reading

CREDIT		GENERAL		FOUNDATION	
Nature of texts: The candidate can read texts that go beyond what is immediately accessible or related to personal interest and experience. Some texts feature unfamiliar, abstract ideas and complexity of structure and tone. As the nature of the text permits, the candidate can:		Nature of texts: The candidate can read texts that are accessible as a whole, mainly related to personal interest and experience, dealing with concrete human relationships or containing clearly presented ideas. As the nature of the text permits, the candidate can:		Nature of texts: The candidate can read texts that are, for the most part, brief and readily accessible, related to personal interest and experiences, dealing with concrete human relationships or containing clearly presented ideas. As the nature of the texts permits, the candidate can:	
make a clear concise statement of the main concerns of the text, and show awareness of their interrelationships;		make a clear statement of the main concerns of the text;		state the main concerns of the text;	
state accurately in his or her own words (where appropriate) and collate as required, items of information retrieved from the text;		state accurately in his or her own words (where appropriate) individual items retrieved from the text;		state accurately individual items of information from areas of the text which have been clearly defined;	
draw a precise inference from a key statement or statements, and substantiate this from evidence in the text;		draw a precise inference from a key statement in the text;		draw an acceptable simple inference from a key statement in the text;	
comment relevantly on some aspects of the author's point of view, and show some skill in justifying the comment from personal experience and knowledge, and from evidence in the text;		comment relevantly on a clearly defined aspect of the author's point of view, and justify the comment from personal experience and knowledge and from evidence in the text;		comment simply and intelligibly on an aspect of the author's point of view that has been clearly defined and relate it to personal experience and/or knowledge;	
demonstrates some awareness of the author's technique by analysis, using critical terminology where appropriate.		identify individual features of the author's technique and explain their effects.		identify a feature (or features) of the author's technique which contributes to some clearly defined effect.	
1. The candidate demonstrates a sureness and sensitivity of understanding and appreciation in responding to particular questions on the various aspects of purpose. The responses are more consistent, more perceptive and more substantial (as required) than at grade 2.	2. While displaying as appropriate the characterisitics required for Credit Level, the candidate's responses are less consistent, less clear in perception and less full in explanation than at grade 1. Overall the performance is more uneven than at grade 1.	3. The candidate demonstrates a clear understanding and a sound appreciation in responding to particular questions on the various aspects of purpose. The responses are more consistent, more relevant and more successful in retrieving, paraphrasing, explaining and justifying than at grade 4.	4. While displaying as appropriate the characteristics essential for General Level the candidate's responses are less apt in illustration and explanation, and less successful in retrieving, paraphrasing, explaining and justifying than at grade 3. Overall the performance is more uneven than at grade 3.	5. The candidate demonstrates understanding and some appreciation in responding to particular questions on the various aspects of purpose. The responses are more consistent, more comprehensible and more specific than at grade 6.	6. While displaying as appropriate the characteristics essential for Foundation Level, the candidate is less consistent, less clear and more ambiguous in communicating responses than at grade 5. Overall the performance is more uneven than at grade 5.

Writing (applicable to folio and examination)

CREDIT	GENERAL	FOUNDATION
The work displays some distinction in ideas, construction and language. This is shown by a detailed attention to the purposes of the writing task; qualities such as knowledge, insight, imagination; and by development that is sustained. Vocabulary, paragraphing and sentence construction are accurate and varied. As the task requires, the candidate can:	The work shows a general awareness of the purposes of the writing task. It has a number of appropriate ideas and evidence of structure. Vocabulary is on the whole accurate, but lacks variety. As the task requires, the candidate can:	The work shows a few signs of appropriateness and commitment to the purposes of the writing task. As the task requires, the candidate can:
convey information, selecting and highlighting what is most significant;	convey information in some kind of sequence;	convey simple information;
marshal ideas and evidence in support of an argument; these ideas have depth and some complexity; he or she is capable of objectivity, generalisation and evaluation;	order and present ideas and opinions with an attempt at reasoning;	present ideas and opinions in concrete personal terms;
give a succinct account of a personal experience: the writing has insight and self-awareness;	give a reasonably clear account of a personal experience with some sense of involvement;	convey the gist of a personal experience;
express personal feelings and reactions sensitively;	express personal feelings and reactions with some attempt to go beyond bald statement;	make a bald statement of personal feelings or reactions;
display some skill in using the conventions of a chosen literary form, and in manipulating language to achieve particular effects. A combination of these qualities may be called for by any one writing task.	use some of the more obvious conventions of a chosen literary form, and occasionally use language to achieve particular effects. A combination of these qualities may be called for by any one writing task.	display rudimentary awareness of the more obvious conventions of a chosen literary form, and occasionally attempt to use language to achieve particular effects. A combination of these may be called for by any one task.
Intelligibility and correctness. Writing which the candidate submits communicates meaning clearly at first reading. Sentence construction is accurate and formal errors will not be significant.	Writing which the candidate submits as finished work communicates meaning at first reading. There are some lapses in punctuation, spelling and sentence construction.	Writing communicates meaning largely at first reading: however, some further reading is necessary because of obtrusive formal errors and/or structural weaknesses, including inaccurate sentence construction and poor vocabulary.
Length. When appropriate, the candidate can sustain the quality of writing at some length. Extended writing submitted in the folio should not normally exceed 800 words in length. Length should be appropriate to the purposes of the writing task.	Length is appropriate to the purposes of the writing task.	100 words is to be taken as a rough guide to the minimum length expected for each finished piece of work, but the overriding consideration should be that the length is appropriate to the purposes of the writing task.

1. The finished communication is clear and stylish. Attention to purpose is detailed and sensitive. Writing shows overall distinction in ideas, construction and language. Vocabulary is apt and extensive, and paragraphing and sentence construction are skilful. In these respects performance transcends the level of accuracy and variety acceptable at grade 2.	2. Evidence of one or more of the qualities of distinction in ideas, construction or language is present but these qualities are less well sustained and/or combined than at grade 1. In the main, writing is substantial, accurate and relevant, but it lacks the insight, economy and style which characterise achievement at grade 1.	3. Writing characterised by overall adequacy of communication. It conveys its meaning clearly and sentence construction and paragraphing are on the whole accurate. There is a reasonably sustained attention to purpose, and structure shows some coherence. Where appropriate there is a measure of generalisation and objectivity in reasoning.	4. Writing approaches the qualities of adequacy required for grade 3 but is clearly seen to be impaired in one of the following ways: there are significant inaccuracies in sentence construction, or the work is thin in appropriate ideas, or the work is weak in structure.	5. Writing rises a little above basic intelligibility and rudimentary attention to purpose. Formal errors and weaknesses are obtrusive but not as numerous as at grade 6. Attention to the purposes of the writing task is weak but the quality of the writer's ideas is perceptibly stronger than at grade 6.	6. Writing contains many formal errors and structural weaknesses but they do not overall have the effect of baffling the reader. The conveying of simple information is marked by obscurities and extraneous detail, and the presentation of ideas, opinions and personal experience is somewhat rambling and disjointed.

Individual Talk

CREDIT		GENERAL		FOUNDATION	
Content The candidate can: express ideas of quality, relevance and interest; link ideas clearly to each other and to the main purpose of the task.		*Content* The candidate can: express appropriate ideas; link ideas with some skill.		*Content* The candidate can: express obvious and simple ideas; display little skill in linking ideas.	
Purpose The candidate can, as appropriate: convey information, highlighting what is most significant; marshal ideas and evidence in support of an argument; give a succinct and coherent account of a personal experience, with sensitive expression of feelings and reactions; in story telling, achieve effect through creative use of structure, tone, timing, vocabulary and characterisation.		*Purpose* The candidate can, as appropriate: convey information in an orderly sequence; order and present ideas and opinions with some attempt at reasoning; give a reasonably coherent account of a personal experience, expressing feelings and reactions with some sense of involvement; in story telling set the scene, sustain the narrative to its climax and convey some sense of character.		*Purpose* The candidate can: present simple facts, ideas or opinions with little attempt at sequencing; give a simple account of a personal experience with a limited sense of involvement; in story telling, set the scene and outline the narrative.	
Language The candidate: uses varied and accurate vocabulary; uses an appropriately wide range of spoken language structures; uses a register appropriate to topic and audience.		*Language* The candidate: uses vocabulary and spoken language structures which are largely accurate; shows some awareness of appropriate register.		*Language* The candidate: uses a limited range of vocabulary and spoken language structures; is restricted in register.	
Expression The candidate: is consistently audible and clear; is consistently fluent; adjusts pace to suit the purpose; varies intonation to point up meaning.		*Expression* The candidate: is largely audible and clear; displays some fluency; shows some signs of ability to vary intonation to point up meaning, or to adjust pace to suit the purpose.		*Expression* The candidate is, in part, audible and clear.	
Awareness of Audience The candidate: takes due account of the requirements and reactions of the audience; makes appropriate use of eye-contact, facial expression and gesture; requires little or no prompting.		*Awareness of Audience* The candidate: shows awareness of the requirements and reactions of the audience; occasionally makes appropriate use of eye-contact, facial expression and gesture; requires some support through prompting and/or questioning.		*Awareness of Audience* The candidate: shows limited awareness of the requirements and reactions of the audience; requires substantial support through prompting and/or questioning.	
Duration The candidate can sustain his talk at considerable length as appropriate to the purpose.		*Duration* The candidate can sustain his talk at some length, as appropriate to the purpose.		*Duration* The candidate shows a limited ability to sustain his talk, as appropriate to the purpose.	
1. The candidate's performance is distinguished by a consistent and alert attention to purpose. It also combines some of the following features: high quality in content and language, confidence of expression, sensitive awareness of situation and audience. Overall, the performance is characterised by consistency of quality.	2. The candidate's attention to purpose is sound, but lacks some sophistication, insight, fullness. In other respects the performance is generally good, but it is less rich / less confident / less sensitive / less consistent than at grade 1.	3. The candidate's attention to purpose is intermittent but adequate. It also combines some of the following features: adequate content, adequate accuracy of language, adequate expression, adequate awareness of audience.	4. The candidate's attention to purpose, though impaired in some significant way, just achieves the adequacy required for General Level. Despite weaknesses, the combination of qualities of content, language, expression, awareness of audience just achieve overall adequacy.	5. The candidate's performance shows a few signs of attention to purpose. It also combines some of the following features: several items of content though weakened by irrelevance and/or obscurity, intelligible language weakened by inaccuracy, some limited awareness of audience, expression reasonably audible and clear.	6. The candidate communicates a few intelligible ideas at least one of which is to the point.

Discussion

CREDIT		GENERAL		FOUNDATION	
In discussion the candidate's performance is characterised by the following:		In discussion the candidate's performance is characterised by the following:		In discussion the candidate's performance is characterised by the following:	
Substance and Relevance of Contribution The candidate's contribution is substantial in quality and is relevant to the purpose of the discussion. The candidate can: provide a good number of relevant ideas / responses / opinions / experiences; support ideas with evidence; question and answer relevantly.		*Substance and Relevance of Contribution* The candidate can contribute some relevant ideas / responses / opinions / experiences and either occasionally support these with evidence / reasons; or occasionally question and answer relevantly.		*Substance and Relevance of Contribution* The candidate can contribute a few ideas / responses / opinions / experiences, and these are only tenuously relevant.	
Account Taken of Other Contributions The candidate takes account of what others have to say, in several of the following ways: by analysing / summarising / using / expanding / supporting / challenging / refuting their contributions.		*Account Taken of Other Contributions* The candidate on the whole takes some account of what others have to say, in one of the following ways: by summarising / using / expanding / supporting / challenging their contributions.		*Account Taken of Other Contributions* The candidate shows a few signs of taking account of what others have to say, in one of the following ways: by repeating / using / supporting / challenging their contributions.	
Awareness of Situation The candidate behaves in a way appropriate to the situation by the following: acknowledging the status of any designated participant (eg, chair, leader, interviewer, etc); allowing / encouraging others to have their say; speaking readily, but not excessively; using language suited to the listener(s).		*Awareness of Situation* The candidate behaves in a way appropriate to the situation by two of the following: acknowledging the status of any designated participant (eg, chair, leader, interviewer, etc); allowing / encouraging others to have their say; speaking readily, but not excessively; using language suited to the listener(s).		*Awareness of Situation* The candidate shows a few signs of attempting to behave in a way appropriate to the situation by one of the following: acknowledging the status of any designated participant (eg, chair, leader, interviewer, etc); allowing / encouraging others to have their say; speaking readily, but not excessively; using language suited to the listener(s).	
Control of Expression The candidate is consistently audible and clear and shows some skill in varying intonation to point up meaning and in adjusting pace to suit the circumstances.		*Control of Expression* The candidate is largely audible and clear, and shows some signs of varying intonation to point up meaning or adjusting pace to suit the circumstances.		*Control of Expression* The candidate is in part audible and clear.	
1. The candidate's performance is distinguished by a consistent, alert attention to purpose. It also combines some of the following features: high quality in contributions and taking account of what others say; confidence of expression; tactful awareness of the situation. Overall the performance is characterised by consistency of quality.	2. The candidate's attention to purpose is sound, but lacks some shrewdness, tenacity, subtlety. In other respects the performance is generally good, but it is less fertile / less confident / less sensitive / less consistent than at grade 1.	3. The candidate's attention to purpose is adequate. It also combines some of the following features: adequate substance and relevance of contribution, adequate account taken of other contributions, adequate awareness of situation, adequate control of expression.	4. The candidate's attention to purpose, although impaired in some significant ways, just achieves the adequacy required for General Level. It also combines some of the following features: substance and relevance of contribution, account taken of other contributions, awareness of situation, control of expression. One or more of these is impaired in some way but the combination just achieves overall adequacy.	5. The candidate's performance shows a few signs of attention to purpose. It also combines some of the following features: a few contributions, though weakened by irrelevance, some limited account taken of others, some limited awareness of situation, reasonably audible and clear expression.	6. The candidate makes at least one audible, intelligible attempt to contribute relevantly to the course of the discussion, and shows some signs of willingness to cooperate in the situation or discussion.

Appendix B

Data illustrating performance in the individual criteria

Notes on presentation

The data from critical evaluations and writing scripts are presented in tables which summarise data from the 1991 and 1992 samples, while the same information is presented graphically below the tables. The information recorded relates to the candidates' best performance on each criterion.

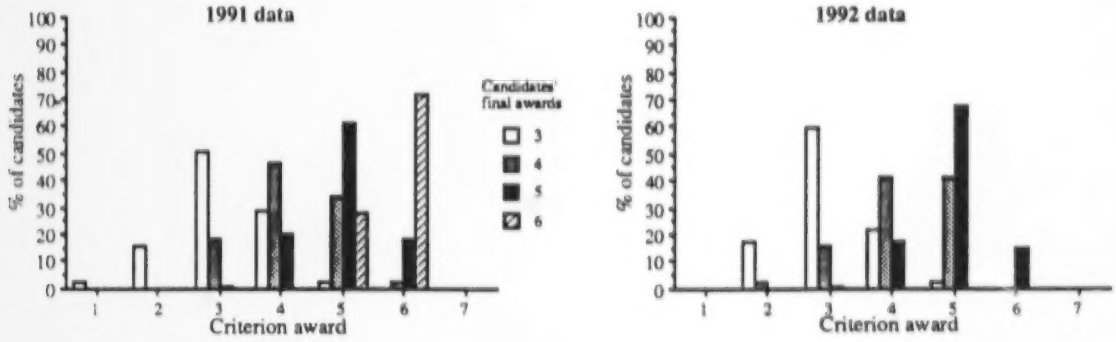
Each row of the tables presents the information for those candidates whose overall Standard Grade award was at the grade stated at the left of the row. The bottom row gives an overall sample distribution. The columns of the tables give the percentages of each group whose performance on this criterion was at the level stated at the top of the column.

The data on the first of these criteria (Critical Evaluations, criterion 1, 'statement of main ideas and purposes of the text') is explained in some detail. This is to serve as an explanatory illustration of the way that these data may be interpreted. Thereafter detailed explanation is not offered, but points of particular interest are noted.

Critical Evaluations: the individual criteria

Criterion 1: statement of main ideas and purposes of the text

	1991 data							1992 data						
	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7
G3 award	2	16	51	29	2	0	0	0	17	59	22	2	0	0
G4 award	0	0	18	46	34	2	0	0	2	16	41	41	0	0
G5 award	0	0	1	20	61	18	0	0	0	1	17	67	15	0
G6 award	0	0	0	0	28	72	0	Insufficient no. of grade 6 overall awards for analysis						
Overall	1	5	21	29	32	13	0	0	6	25	27	36	5	0



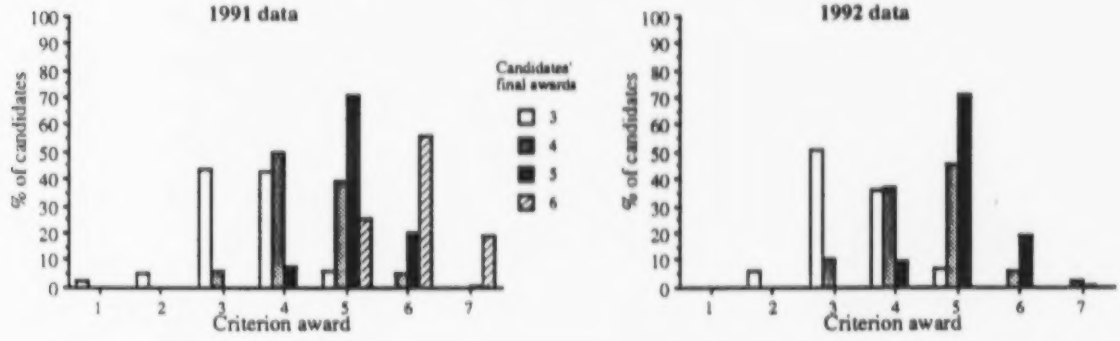
The table shows that, for example 2% of 1991 candidates who achieved an overall Standard Grade award of grade 3, actually managed to achieve a grade 1 for the 'main ideas' criterion. 16% of 'grade 3s' achieved grade 2 on the criterion, 51% achieved grade 3, and so on.

It is also apparent that there is very little variation of more than one grade level between the candidate's final overall Standard Grade result and the performance on this criterion. Roughly 15-20% of candidates appear to be able to achieve above the level of their final award, while a slightly larger proportion are performing one grade down (though are presumably compensating for this in other ways).

The largest amount of variation appears to be occurring among those candidates whose final award was grade 4. In the 1991 sample 34%, and in the 1992 sample 41% of these candidates could only achieve a best performance at grade 5. This would suggest that there is a barrier for some candidates in moving beyond a statement of main ideas which displays a 'basic grasp' (Foundation Level) to one which shows relatively greater 'completeness' and 'correctness' (General Level).

Criterion 2: statement of personal reaction to the text

	1991 data							1992 data						
	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7
G3 award	2	5	44	43	6	0	0	0	6	51	36	7	0	0
G4 award	0	0	6	50	39	5	0	0	0	10	37	45	6	2
G5 award	0	0	0	8	71	20	1	0	0	0	9	71	19	1
G6 award	0	0	0	0	25	56	19	Insufficient no. of grade 6 overall awards for analysis						
Overall	1	2	15	30	37	13	2	0	2	20	28	41	9	1



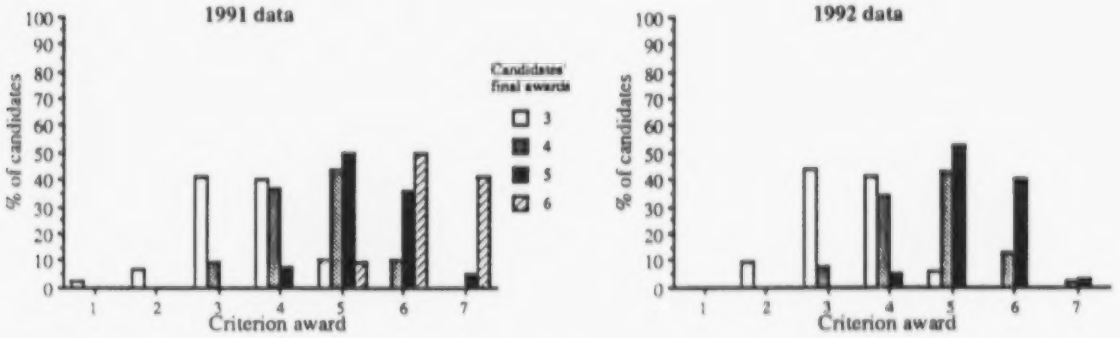
This is one of the criteria which was generally less well performed. Very few candidates managed to perform better on the individual criterion than they had overall in the Standard Grade.

This is particularly evident among those candidates whose final overall Standard Grade award was grade 3 or 4. In both years between a third and half of these candidates performed at least one grade below their final award level on this criterion.

It may be that the gap between the statement of this criterion at Foundation Level to its General Level statement is too large for some candidates to bridge. While candidates would appear to have little trouble in making a 'brief but clear' statement of personal response, it seems that the grade 3 demand that they display 'a degree of insight' is much more difficult for them to achieve.

Criterion 3: awareness of technique (including, at higher levels, use of critical terminology)

	1991 data							1992 data						
	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7
G3 award	2	7	41	40	10	0	0	0	9	44	41	6	0	0
G4 award	0	0	9	37	44	10	0	0	0	8	34	43	13	2
G5 award	0	0	0	8	50	36	5	0	0	0	5	52	40	3
G6 award	0	0	0	0	9	50	41	Insufficient no. of grade 6 overall awards for analysis						
Overall	1	2	15	26	32	19	6	0	3	17	26	34	18	2



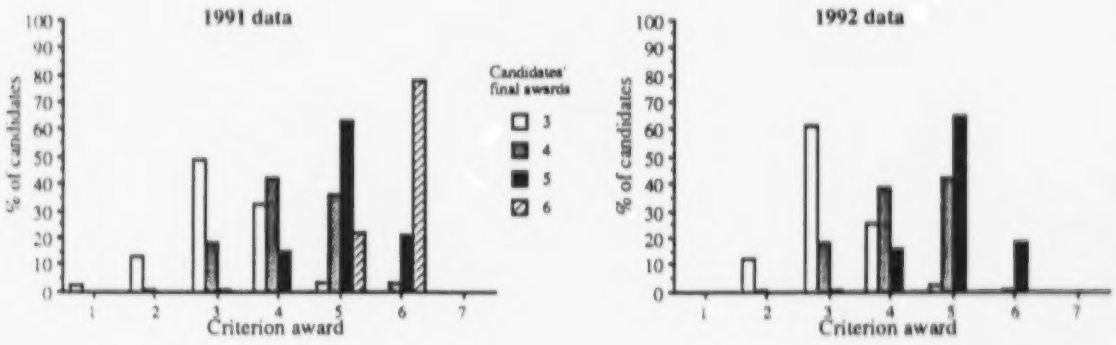
This criterion appeared to cause difficulty to candidates at all levels of ability. Approximately half of all candidates in both the 1991 and 1992 samples failed to perform at a level equivalent to their final overall Standard Grade award.

In both years, candidates whose final award was a grade 4 appeared to be the group who had most difficulty in performing up to their overall level. This suggests that the transition from the Foundation to the General criteria is particularly difficult. It is at this transition that candidates move from being asked to 'identify one or two features of technique' in 'simple non-technical language' to being asked to 'explain their effects' and use 'basic critical terminology'.

The demand for analysis of the text, and the need for the language to describe it, is clearly a problem for many of these candidates.

Criterion 4: awareness of purpose of the assignment (which includes appropriate length of response)

	1991 data							1992 data						
	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7
G3 award	2	13	49	32	3	0	0	0	12	61	25	2	0	0
G4 award	0	1	18	42	36	3	0	0	1	18	38	42	1	0
G5 award	0	0	1	15	63	21	0	0	0	1	16	65	18	0
G6 award	0	0	0	0	22	78	0	Insufficient no. of grade 6 overall awards for analysis						
Overall	1	4	20	27	32	15	0.3	0	4	26	26	36	7	0



This criterion was generally reasonably well met by most of the candidates. Once again, the greatest degree of variation was apparent among the candidates whose final overall Standard Grade award was grade 4. In the 1991 sample 39% of these candidates failed to perform at grade 4, while in the 1992 sample the corresponding figure was 43%.

Imaginative responses the individual criteria

Because of the relatively small numbers of candidates who submitted imaginative responses as a part of their folio, only a limited amount of analysis was possible on these data. However, there were no statistically significant differences in the performance of candidates on any of the criteria, once allowance was made for the lack of 'mood and tone' and 'awareness of technique' criteria at grades 5 and 6. This suggests relatively homogeneous performance by these candidates.

It was impossible to conduct any analysis of the relative performance of candidates with different levels of overall Standard Grade award as the numbers available were too small to allow this.

The distributions of the candidates' performances on the individual criteria are set out below.

	1991 data N = 51							1992 data N = 38						
	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7
Allusion to relevant areas of content	0 0%	4 8%	5 10%	12 24%	12 24%	19 37%	0 0%	0 0%	1 3%	8 21%	6 16%	20 53%	3 8%	0 0%
Attention to main ideas and purposes	0 0%	2 4%	6 12%	12 24%	9 18%	20 39%	3 6%	0 0%	1 3%	8 21%	4 11%	18 47%	7 18%	0 0%
Evocation of mood and tone*	0 0%	1 2%	3 6%	14 27%	n/a	n/a	33 65%	0 0%	1 3%	1 3%	12 32%	n/a	n/a	24 63%
Awareness of technique (use of stylistic devices)*	0 0%	3 6%	2 4%	15 29%	n/a	n/a	31 61%	0 0%	1 3%	1 3%	15 39%	n/a	n/a	21 55%
Account taken of purpose of assignment	0 0%	3 6%	6 12%	11 20%	12 24%	19 37%	1 2%	0 0%	1 3%	6 16%	7 18%	18 47%	6 16%	0 0%
Overall estimated award†	0 0%	3 6%	5 10%	11 20%	11 20%	22 43%	0 0%	0 0%	1 3%	4 11%	8 21%	19 50%	6 16%	0 0%

* There are no statements of these criteria at grades 5 and 6. Therefore any candidate who failed to perform at grade 4 or above has been recorded as grade 7.

† This row represents estimates of the overall performance of each candidate in 'imaginative responses'. It is a holistic assessment of each piece. The numbers are therefore not the sum of the columns.

Close Reading: the individual criteria

Number of candidates in sample attempting Close Reading papers		
Paper	**1991**	**1992**
Foundation	241	219
General	303	279
Credit	87	76

Criterion 1: state the main concerns of the text

- Percentage of pupils achieving over 65% of the opportunities to display competence at 'stating the main concerns of the text'

	1991 data			1992 data		
	Credit Paper	**General Paper**	**Foundation Paper**	**Credit Paper**	**General Paper**	**Foundation Paper**
Grade 3 award	58	94	52	12	63	91
Grade 4 award	27	77	45	0	40	74
Grade 5 award	n/a	24	28	n/a	20	73
Grade 6 award	n/a	15	6	n/a	n/a	n/a
Overall	**51**	**63**	**34**	**11**	**42**	**76**

For the criterion relating to 'a statement of the main concerns of the text', pupils who sat the Foundation paper in 1992 were much more likely than those who sat the 1991 Foundation paper to display competence. Pupils who attempted the 1992 Credit and General papers, on the other hand, were less likely to demonstrate competence than those who attempted the equivalent 1991 papers.

Criterion 2: state individual items retrieved from the text

- Percentage of pupils achieving over 65% of the opportunities to display competence at 'stating individual items retrieved from the text'

	1991 data			1992 data		
	Credit Paper	**General Paper**	**Foundation Paper**	**Credit Paper**	**General Paper**	**Foundation Paper**
Grade 3 award	33	83	100	62	93	100
Grade 4 award	7	54	93	54	73	99
Grade 5 award	n/a	10	73	n/a	46	90
Grade 6 award	n/a	5	42	n/a	n/a	n/a
Overall	**28**	**48**	**79**	**61**	**72**	**94**

Pupils attempting the Credit and General papers in 1992 had more success at 'stating individual items' than those who sat the equivalent 1991 papers.

Criterion 3: draw an inference from a statement in the text

- Percentage of pupils achieving over 65% of the opportunities to display competence at 'drawing an inference from a statement in the text'

	1991 data			1992 data		
	Credit Paper	**General Paper**	**Foundation Paper**	**Credit Paper**	**General Paper**	**Foundation Paper**
Grade 3 award	22	81	100	8	56	94
Grade 4 award	0	42	94	0	19	95
Grade 5 award	n/a	7	73	n/a	5	74
Grade 6 award	n/a	0	26	n/a	n/a	n/a
Overall	**17**	**42**	**77**	**7**	**28**	**86**

Pupils attempting the Credit and General papers in 1991 had more success at 'drawing an inference' than those who sat the equivalent 1991 papers.

Criterion 4: comment on an aspect of the author's point of view

- Percentage of pupils achieving over 65% of the opportunities to display competence at 'commenting on an aspect of the author's point of view'

	1991 data			1992 data		
	Credit Paper	**General Paper**	**Foundation Paper**	**Credit Paper**	**General Paper**	**Foundation Paper**
Grade 3 award	39	50	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Grade 4 award	0	33	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Grade 5 award	n/a	16	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Grade 6 award	n/a	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Overall	**27**	**31**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**

Criterion 5: identify features of the author's technique

- Percentage of pupils achieving over 65% of the opportunities to display competence at 'identifying features of the author's technique'

	1991 data			1992 data		
	Credit Paper	**General Paper**	**Foundation Paper**	**Credit Paper**	**General Paper**	**Foundation Paper**
Grade 3 award	14	38	71	23	56	74
Grade 4 award	0	8	48	9	16	51
Grade 5 award	n/a	1	23	n/a	4	30
Grade 6 award	n/a	0	16	n/a	n/a	n/a
Overall	**12**	**16**	**37**	**21**	**26**	**44**

Pupils who sat the 1992 General and Credit papers were more likely to display competence at 'identifying features of the author's technique' than those who sat the equivalent 1991 papers.

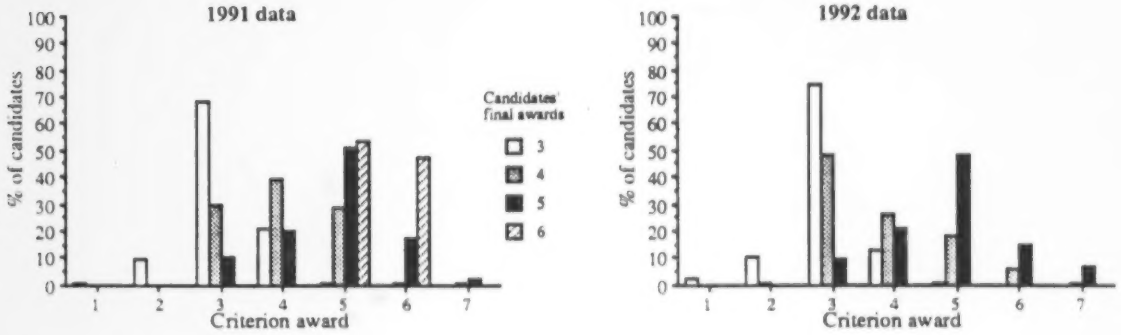
It appears that across the two years of papers there were some differences in the difficulty of questions relating to certain criteria. This affected the likelihood of pupils displaying competence in the criteria.

Writing: the individual criteria

Criterion 1: awareness of the purpose of the writing task

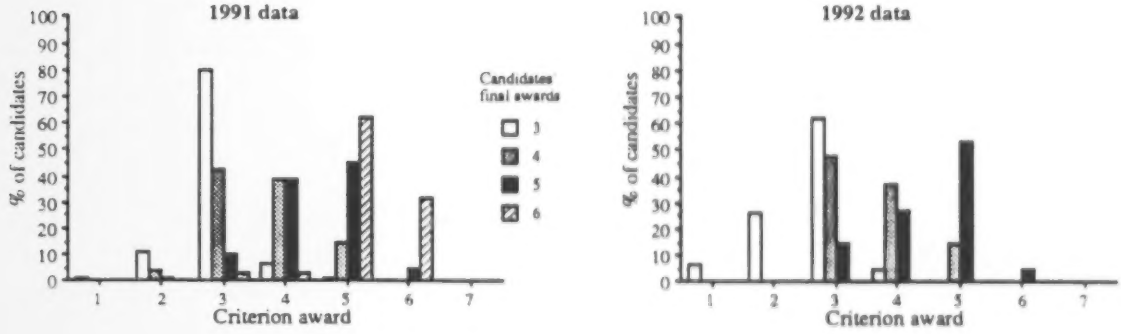
Writing exam: awareness of purpose

	1991 data							1992 data						
	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7
G3 award	1	9	68	21	1	0	0	2	10	74	13	1	0	0
G4 award	0	0	30	39	29	1	1	0	1	48	26	18	6	1
G5 award	0	0	10	20	51	17	2	0	0	9	21	48	15	7
G6 award	0	0	0	0	53	47	0	Insufficient no. of grade 6 overall awards for analysis						
Overall	0	3	32	24	29	10	1	1	4	43	20	22	7	3



Writing folio: awareness of purpose

	1991 data							1992 data						
	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7
G3 award	1	11	80	7	1	0	0	7	26	62	5	0	0	0
G4 award	0	4	42	39	15	0	0	0	0	48	37	15	0	0
G5 award	0	1	10	39	45	5	0	0	0	15	27	53	5	0
G6 award	0	0	3	3	62	31	0	Insufficient no. of grade 6 overall awards for analysis						
Overall	0	5	40	26	25	4	0	2	9	41	23	23	2	0

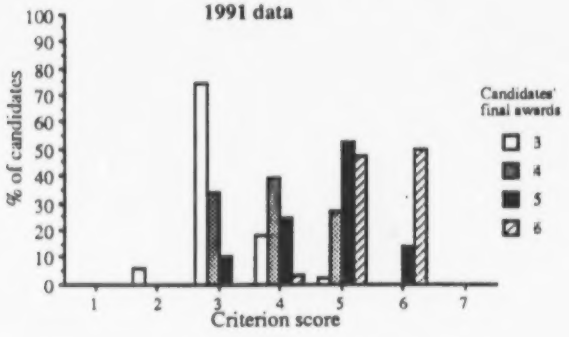


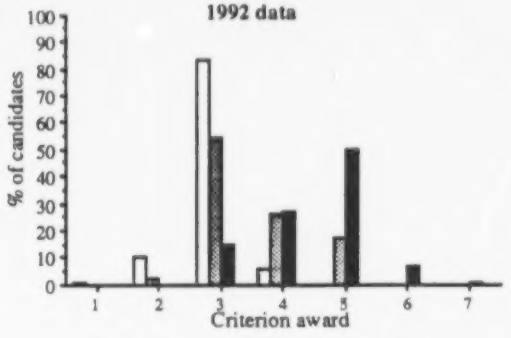
This is a criterion which is generally applicable to all types of writing. There were no statistically significant differences between the 1991 and 1992 samples. The data for the folio relates to the **better** performance from the two folio pieces and reveals that candidates are **capable** of significantly better performance in the folio than in the examination (but see main text for further discussion).

Criterion 2: convey information

Writing exam: conveyance of information

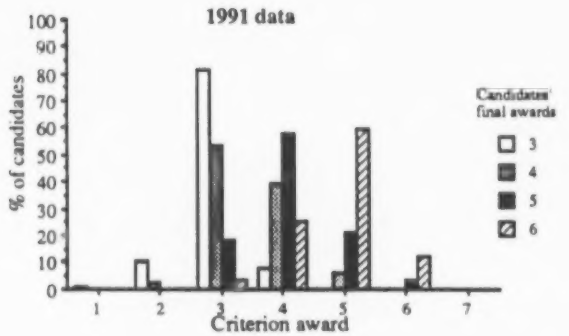
	1991 data							1992 data						
	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7
G3 award	0	6	74	18	2	0	0	1	10	74	13	1	0	0
G4 award	0	0	34	39	27	0	0	0	2	54	26	17	0	0
G5 award	0	0	10	24	52	14	0	0	0	15	27	50	7	1
G6 award	0	0	0	3	47	50	0	Insufficient no. of grade 6 overall awards for analysis						
Overall	0	2	35	25	29	9	0	0	4	50	20	22	3	0

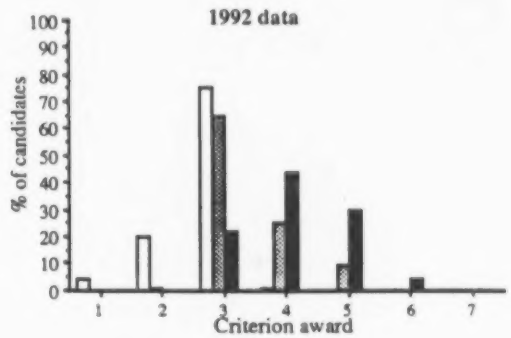




Writing folio: conveyance of information

	1991 data							1992 data						
	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7
G3 award	1	10	81	8	0	0	0	4	20	75	1	0	0	0
G4 award	0	2	53	39	6	0	0	0	1	65	25	9	0	0
G5 award	0	0	18	58	21	3	0	0	0	22	44	30	4	0
G6 award	0	0	3	25	59	12	0	Insufficient no. of grade 6 overall awards for analysis						
Overall	0	4	46	34	14	2	0	1	7	54	24	13	1	0



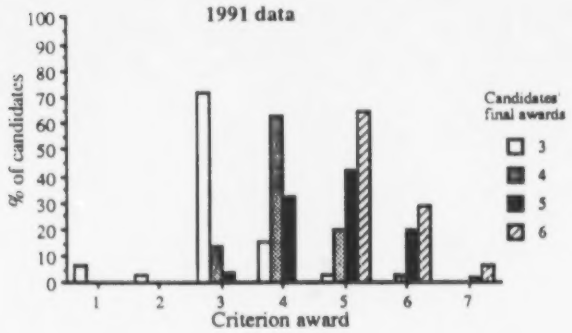


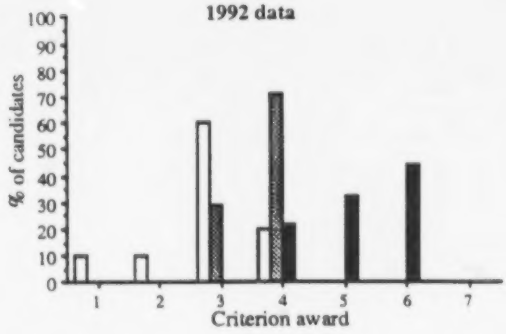
This criterion is generally applicable to all types of writing. Candidates tended to perform better on this criterion than on others. This was particularly apparent in their folio work. In the 1992 examination candidates performed significantly better than in 1991. The data for the folio relates to the **better** performance from the two folio pieces and reveals that candidates are **capable** of significantly better performance in the folio than in the examination (but see main text for further discussion).

Criterion 3: present ideas and opinions

Writing exam: presentation of ideas and opinions

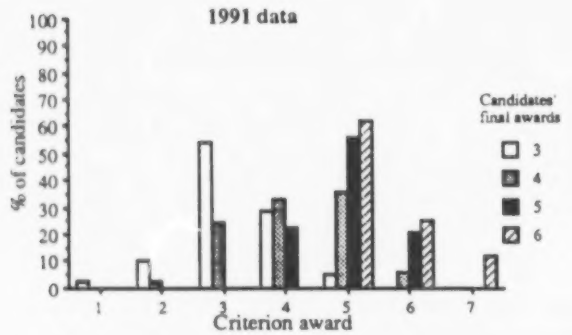
	1991 data (number of cases = 135)							1992 data (number of cases = 33)						
	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7
G3 award	6	3	72	16	3	0	0	10	10	60	20	0	0	0
G4 award	0	0	14	63	20	3	0	0	0	29	71	0	0	0
G5 award	0	0	4	32	42	20	2	0	0	0	22	33	44	0
G6 award	0	0	0	0	65	29	6	Insufficient no. of grade 6 overall awards for analysis						
Overall	2	1	22	32	30	13	2	3	3	30	42	9	12	0

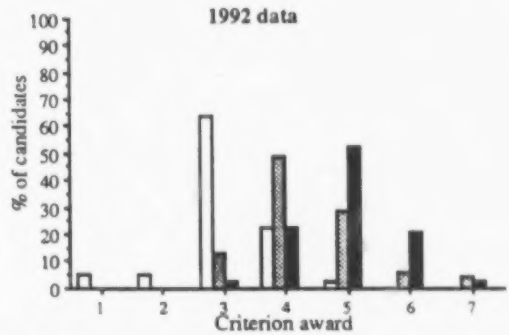




Writing folio: presentation of ideas and opinions

	1991 data (number of cases = 170)							1992 data (number of cases = 159)						
	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7
G3 award	2	10	54	29	5	0	0	5	5	64	23	2	0	0
G4 award	0	2	24	33	36	6	0	0	0	13	49	29	6	4
G5 award	0	0	0	23	56	21	0	0	0	2	23	52	21	2
G6 award	0	0	0	0	62	25	12	Insufficient no. of grade 6 overall awards for analysis						
Overall	1	4	26	27	32	9	1	2	2	28	32	26	8	2



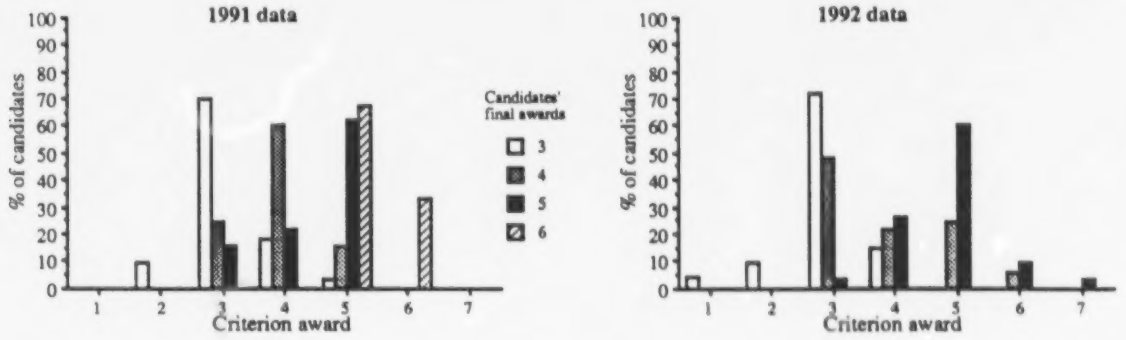


This is a 'specialist' writing criterion which is only applicable to certain types of task. Note the small sample size for the 1992 examination. This presumably reflects the presence of an unappealing question in that year's examination paper and may go some way to account for the relative lack of success of those candidiates whose final award was Standard Grade 5. This criterion tended to be performed relatively poorly. There were no statistically significant differences between candidates' performance in 1991 and 1992 or between the folio and the examination.

Criterion 4: give an account of a personal experience with some sense of involvement

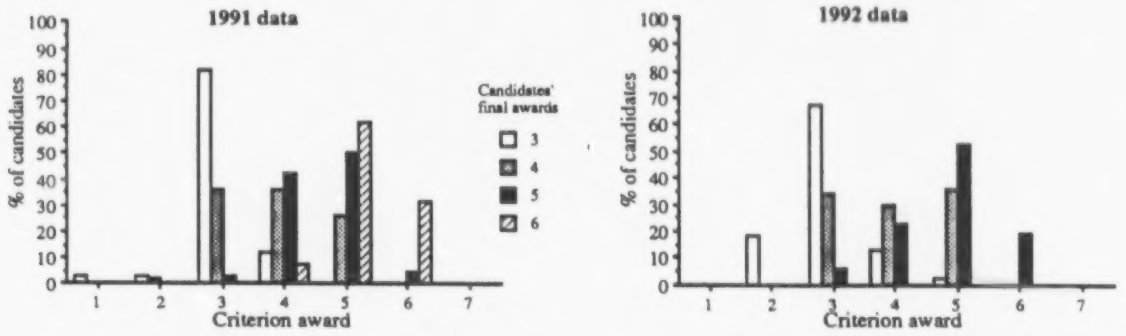
Writing exam: account of a personal experience

	1991 data (number of cases = 111)							1992 data (number of cases = 131)						
	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7
G3 award	0	9	70	18	3	0	0	4	9	72	15	0	0	0
G4 award	0	0	24	60	16	0	0	0	0	48	22	24	6	0
G5 award	0	0	16	22	62	0	0	0	0	3	26	60	9	3
G6 award	0	0	0	0	67	33	0	Insufficient no. of grade 6 overall awards for analysis						
Overall	0	3	33	32	30	3	0	2	3	44	21	25	5	1



Writing folio: account of a personal experience

	1991 data (number of cases = 138)							1992 data (number of cases = 140)						
	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7
G3 award	3	3	81	12	0	0	0	0	18	67	13	2	0	0
G4 award	0	2	36	36	26	0	0	0	0	34	30	36	0	0
G5 award	0	0	3	42	50	5	0	0	0	6	23	52	21	2
G6 award	0	0	0	8	62	31	0	Insufficient no. of grade 6 overall awards for analysis						
Overall	1	1	34	30	30	4	0	0	6	35	22	31	6	0

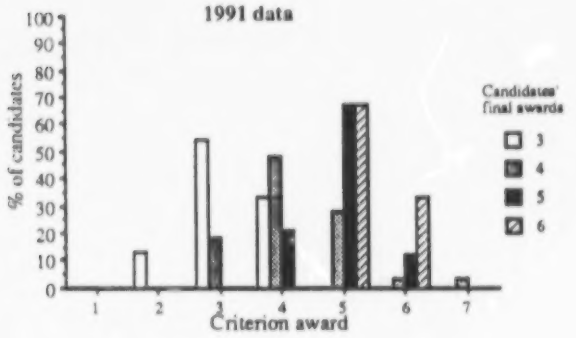


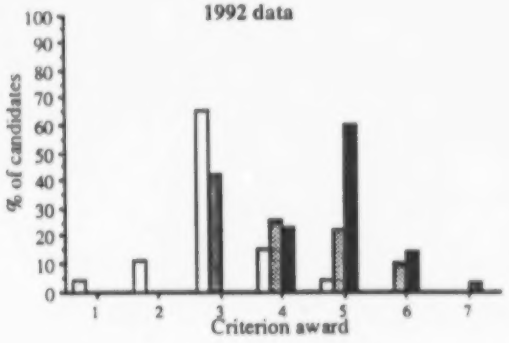
This is a 'specialist' writing criterion which is only applicable to certain types of task. There were no statistically significant differences between candidates' performance in 1991 and 1992 or between the folio and the examination.

Criterion 5: expression of personal feelings and reactions

Writing exam: expression of personal feelings and reactions

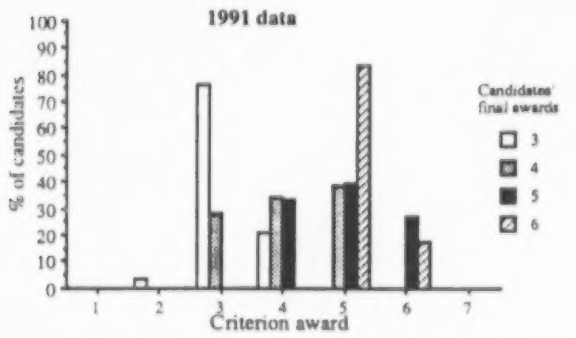
	1991 data (number of cases = 105)							1992 data (number of cases = 131)						
	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7
G3 award	0	13	54	33	0	0	0	4	11	65	15	4	0	0
G4 award	0	0	18	48	28	3	3	0	0	42	26	22	10	0
G5 award	0	0	0	21	67	12	0	0	0	0	23	60	14	3
G6 award	0	0	0	0	67	33	0	Insufficient no. of grade 6 overall awards for analysis						
Overall	0	4	23	32	32	7	1	2	4	39	21	26	8	1

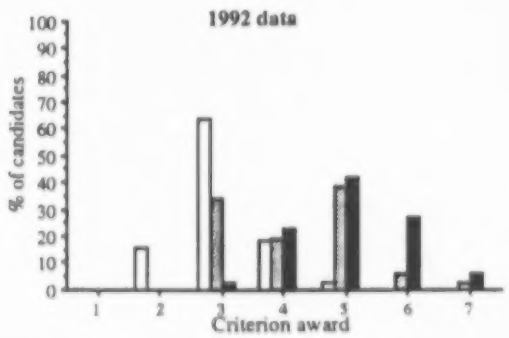




Writing folio: expression of personal feelings and reactions

	1991 data (number of cases = 121)							1992 data (number of cases = 140)						
	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7
G3 award	0	3	76	21	0	0	0	0	16	64	18	2	0	0
G4 award	0	0	28	34	38	0	0	0	0	34	19	38	6	2
G5 award	0	0	0	33	39	27	0	0	0	2	23	42	27	6
G6 award	0	0	0	0	83	17	0	Insufficient no. of grade 6 overall awards for analysis						
Overall	0	1	32	29	30	8	0	0	5	33	20	28	11	3



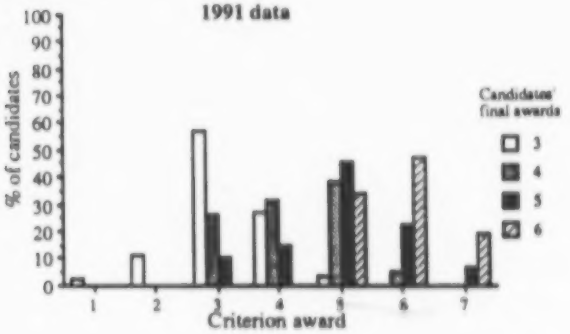


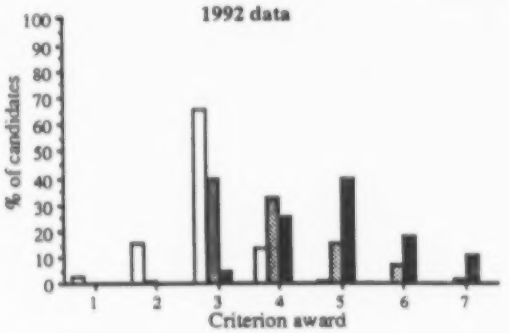
This is a 'specialist' writing criterion which is only applicable to certain types of task. This criterion tended to be performed relatively poorly. There were no statistically significant differences between candidates' performance in 1991 and 1992 or between the folio and the examination.

Criterion 6: using the conventions of a chosen literary form

Writing exam: use of the conventions of a chosen literary form

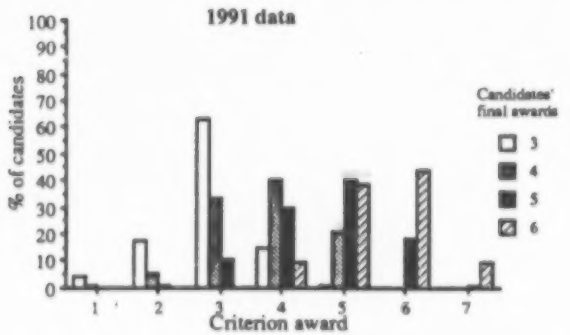
	1991 data							1992 data						
	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7
G3 award	2	11	57	27	3	0	0	3	16	66	14	1	0	0
G4 award	0	0	26	31	38	5	0	0	1	40	33	16	8	2
G5 award	0	0	10	15	45	23	7	0	0	5	25	40	18	11
G6 award	0	0	0	0	34	47	19	Insufficient no. of grade 6 overall awards for analysis						
Overall	1	3	28	22	29	13	4	1	6	37	24	19	9	4

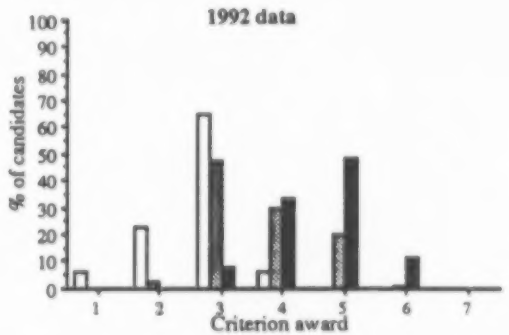




Writing folio: use of the conventions of a chosen literary form

	1991 data							1992 data						
	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7
G3 award	4	17	63	15	1	0	0	6	23	65	6	2	0	0
G4 award	1	5	33	40	21	0	0	0	2	47	30	20	1	0
G5 award	0	1	10	30	40	18	1	0	0	8	33	48	11	0
G6 award	0	0	0	9	38	44	9	Insufficient no. of grade 6 overall awards for analysis						
Overall	2	7	32	26	22	10	1	2	8	40	23	22	4	0



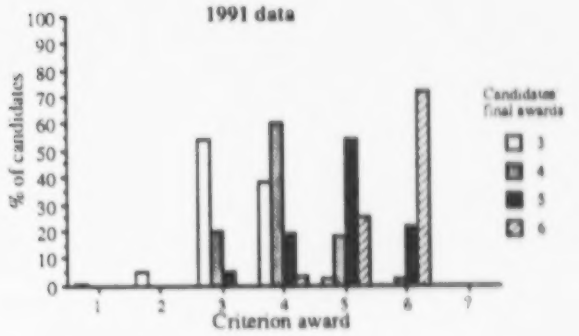


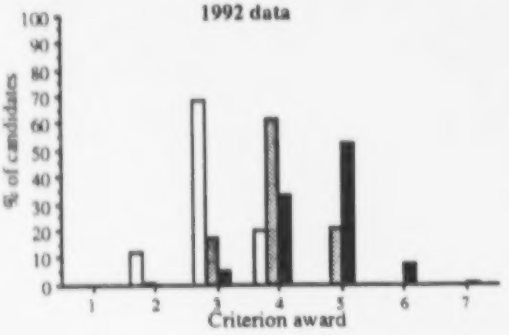
This criterion is generally applicable to all types of writing (though the 'conventions' will differ). It tended to be performed relatively poorly. There were no statistically significant differences between candidates' performance in 1991 and 1992. The data for the folio relates to the **better** performance from the two folio pieces and reveals that candidates are **capable** of significantly better performance in the folio than in the examination (but see main text for further discussion).

Criterion 7: write correctly and intelligibly

Writing exam: writing correctness

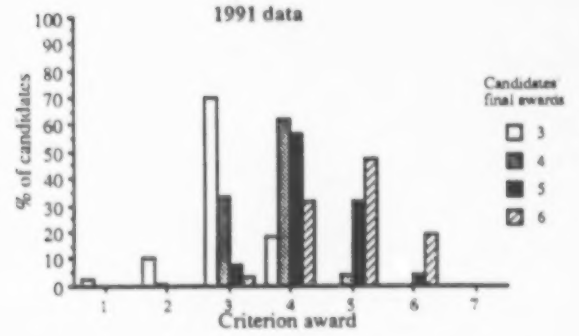
	1991 data							1992 data						
	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7
G3 award	1	5	54	38	2	0	0	0	12	68	20	0	0	0
G4 award	0	0	20	60	18	2	0	0	1	17	61	21	0	0
G5 award	0	0	5	19	54	22	0	0	0	5	33	52	8	1
G6 award	0	0	0	3	25	72	0	Insufficient no. of grade 6 overall awards for analysis						
Overall	0	2	24	35	25	14	0	0	4	30	38	25	3	0

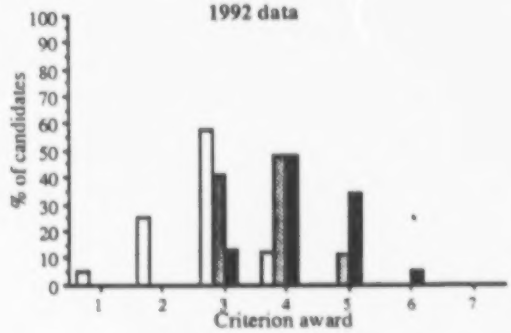




Writing folio: writing correctness

	1991 data							1992 data						
	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7
G3 award	2	10	70	18	0	0	0	5	25	58	12	0	0	0
G4 award	0	1	33	62	4	0	0	0	0	41	48	11	0	0
G5 award	0	0	8	57	31	4	0	0	0	13	48	34	5	0
G6 award	0	0	3	31	47	19	0	Insufficient no. of grade 6 overall awards for analysis						
Overall	1	3	34	44	15	3	0	2	8	37	36	15	2	0



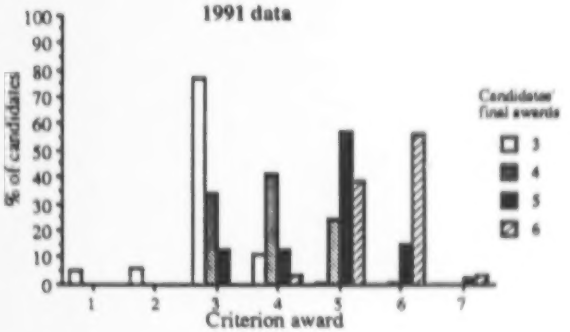


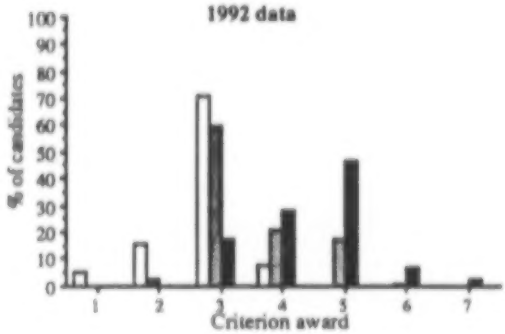
This criterion is generally applicable to all types of writing. There were no statistically significant differences between candidates' performance in 1991 and 1992. The data for the folio relates to the **better** performance from the two folio pieces and reveals that candidates are **capable** of significantly better performance in the folio than in the examination (but see main text for further discussion).

Criterion 8: write at appropriate length

Writing exam: length

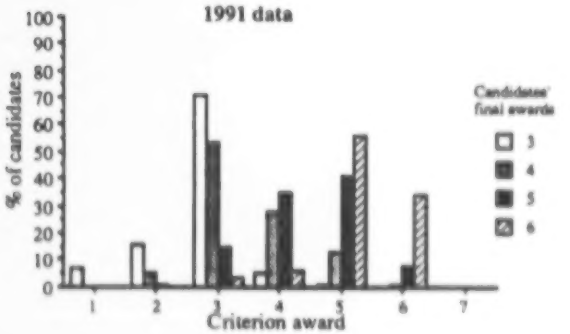
	1991 data							1992 data						
	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7
G3 award	5	6	77	11	1	0	0	5	16	71	8	0	0	0
G4 award	0	0	34	41	24	1	0	0	2	59	21	17	1	0
G5 award	0	0	13	13	57	15	2	0	0	17	28	46	7	2
G6 award	0	0	0	3	38	56	3	Insufficient no. of grade 6 overall awards for analysis						
Overall	2	2	37	20	28	10	1	2	6	49	19	21	3	1

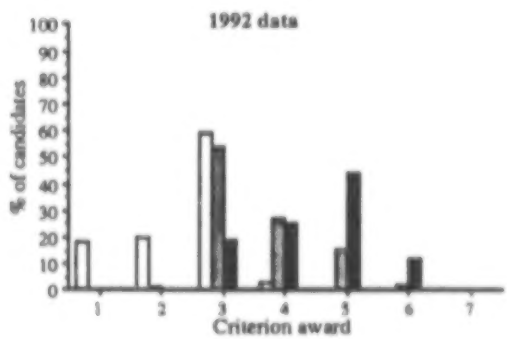




Writing folio: length

	1991 data							1992 data						
	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7
G3 award	7	16	71	5	1	0	0	18	20	59	3	0	0	0
G4 award	0	5	53	28	13	1	0	0	1	54	27	16	2	0
G5 award	0	1	15	35	41	8	0	0	0	19	25	44	12	0
G6 award	0	0	3	6	56	34	0	Insufficient no. of grade 6 overall awards for analysis						
Overall	2	7	42	21	22	6	0	6	7	44	18	20	5	0





This criterion is generally applicable to all types of writing. The performance of the 1992 sample in the examination was significantly better than the 1991 sample. This is particularly apparent for those whose final Standard Grade award was at grades 4 and 5. Performance in the folio was significantly better than performance in the examination in 1991. In 1992 there were no statistically significant differences.

Talking: the individual criteria

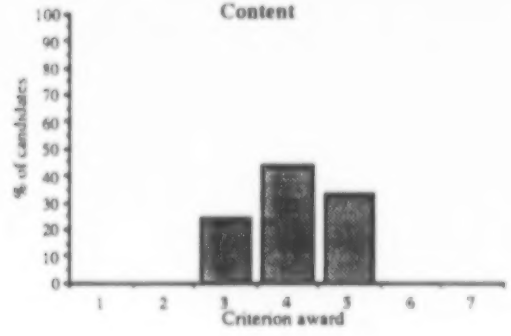
1. Individual Talk

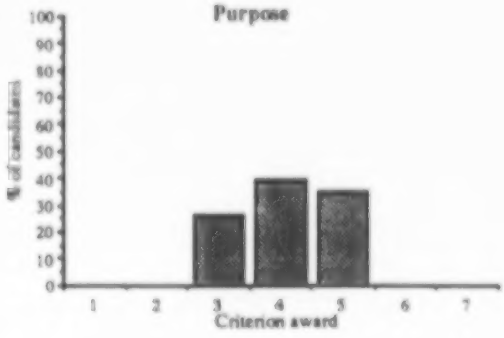
Because of the small numbers involved, the data have not been analysed by the final Standard Grade award gained by the candidates.

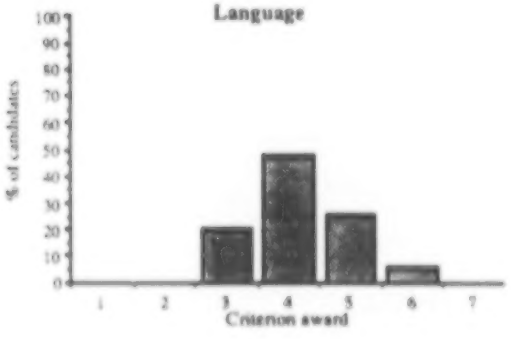
There are no statistically significant differences between the criteria.

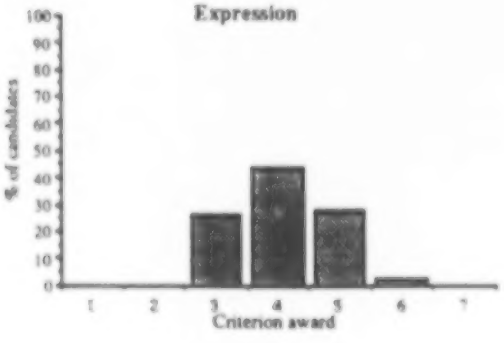
Teachers' estimates of grades in Individual Talk

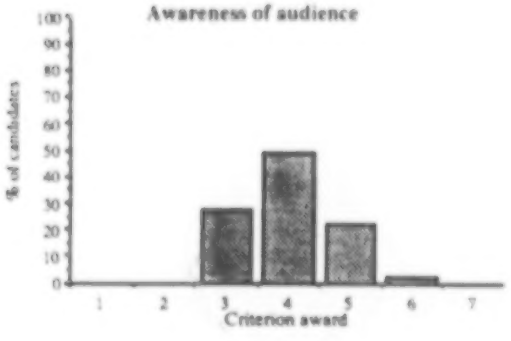
	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	No. of cases
Content	0%	0%	24%	44%	33%	0%	0%	46
Purpose	0%	0%	26%	39%	35%	0%	0%	46
Language	0%	0%	20%	48%	26%	6%	0%	46
Expression	0%	0%	26%	44%	28%	2%	0%	46
Awareness of audience	0%	0%	27%	49%	22%	2%	0%	45
Duration	0%	0%	37%	42%	10%	10%	0%	19
Overall estimated award	0%	0%	25%	43%	29%	3%	0%	65

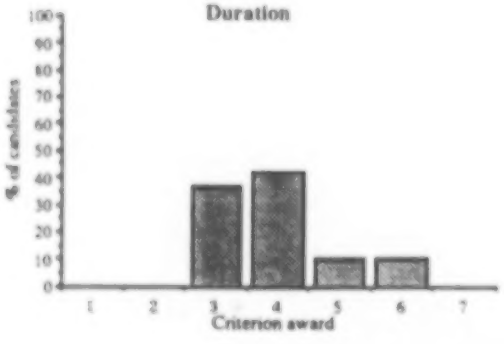












2. Discussion

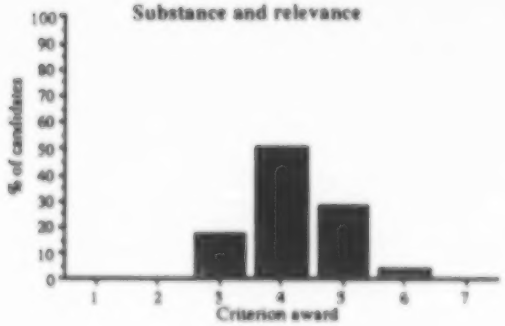
Because of the small numbers involved, the data have not been analysed by the final Standard Grade award gained by the candidates.

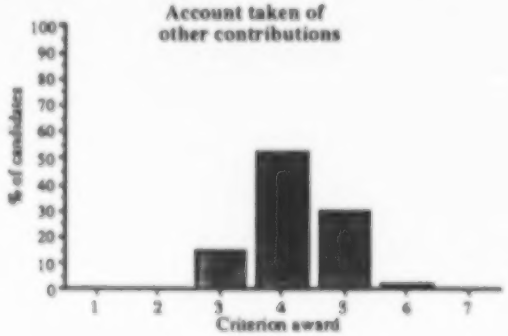
There are no statistically significant differences between criteria for either researchers' or teachers' estimates. Similarly there are no statistically significant differences between researchers' and teachers' estimates for any of the criteria.

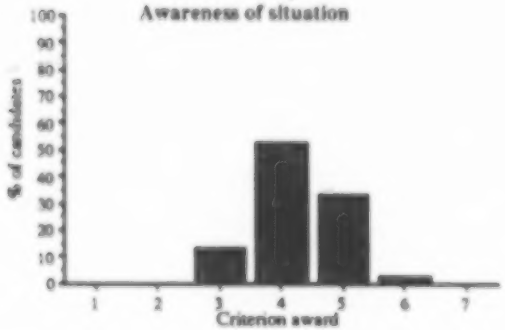
i) Teachers' estimates of grades in Discussion

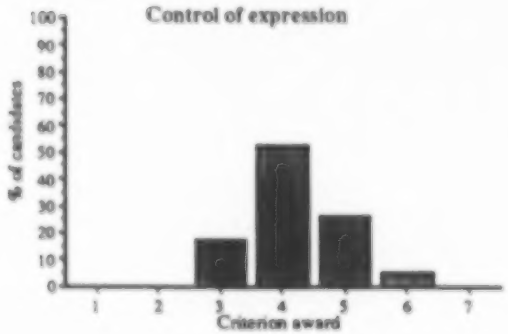
	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	No. of cases
Substance and relevance	0%	0%	17%	50%	28%	4%	0%	46
Account taken of other contributions	0%	0%	15%	52%	30%	2%	0%	46
Awareness of situation	0%	0%	13%	52%	33%	2%	0%	46
Control of expression	0%	0%	17%	52%	26%	5%	0%	42
Overall estimated award	0%	2%	18%	45%	32%	3%	0%	65

Graphs illustrating teachers' estimates







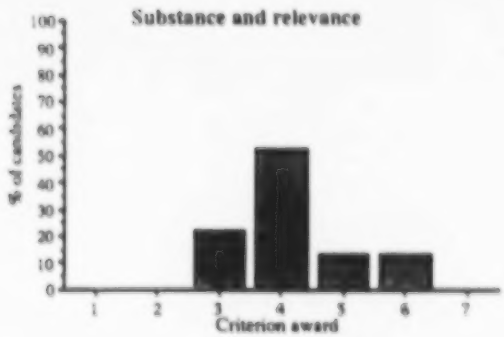


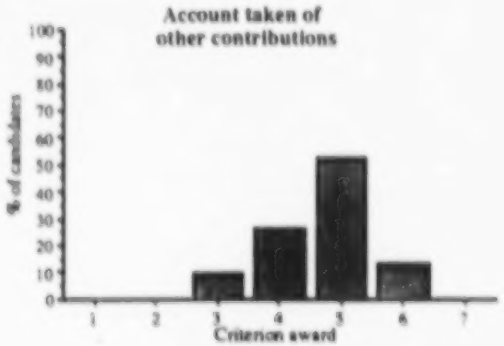
ii) Researchers' estimates of grades in Discussion

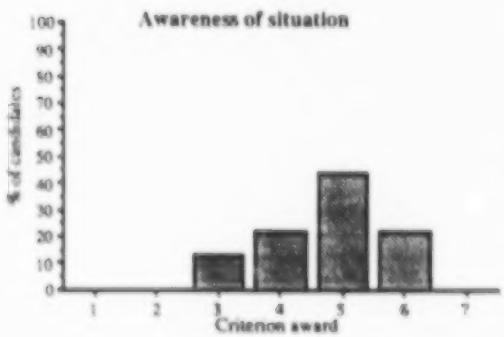
Researchers observed 23 instances of discussion and the estimates of performance in each of the criteria are illustrated below. Of those 23 candidates only 12 are included in the sample of estimates submitted by teachers.. The graphs illustrating performance based on teachers and researchers' estimates are not therefore directly comparable.

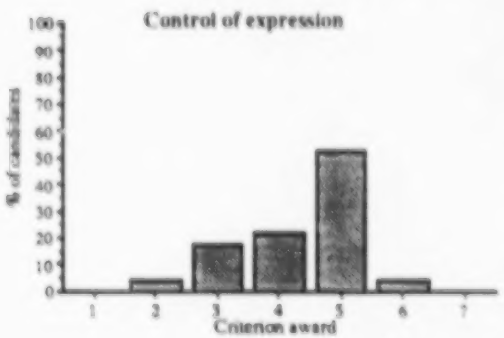
	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	No. of cases
Substance and relevance	0%	0%	22%	52%	13%	13%	0%	23
Account taken of other contributions	0%	0%	9%	26%	52%	13%	0%	23
Awareness of situation	0%	0%	13%	22%	44%	22%	0%	23
Control of expression	0%	4%	17%	22%	52%	4%	0%	23
Overall estimated award	0%	0%	22%	17%	48%	13%	0%	23

Graphs illustrating researchers' estimates









The Scottish Council for Research in Education

'Research in the service of education' is the motto of the Scottish Council for Research in Education. For over 60 years it has put this into action through carrying out research studies in schools and other institutions across the educational system at all levels from pre-school to adult and vocational education. It also provides a range of associated research, information and communication services. SCRE aims to make documents arising from its own research available to those who are interested. Reports in the Project Report series are not specially prepared for publication. Enquiries about SCRE publications are welcome and should be directed to Information Services.

RESEARCH
INFORMATION
EVALUATION
CONSULTANCY
for EDUCATION

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

C
S R
E